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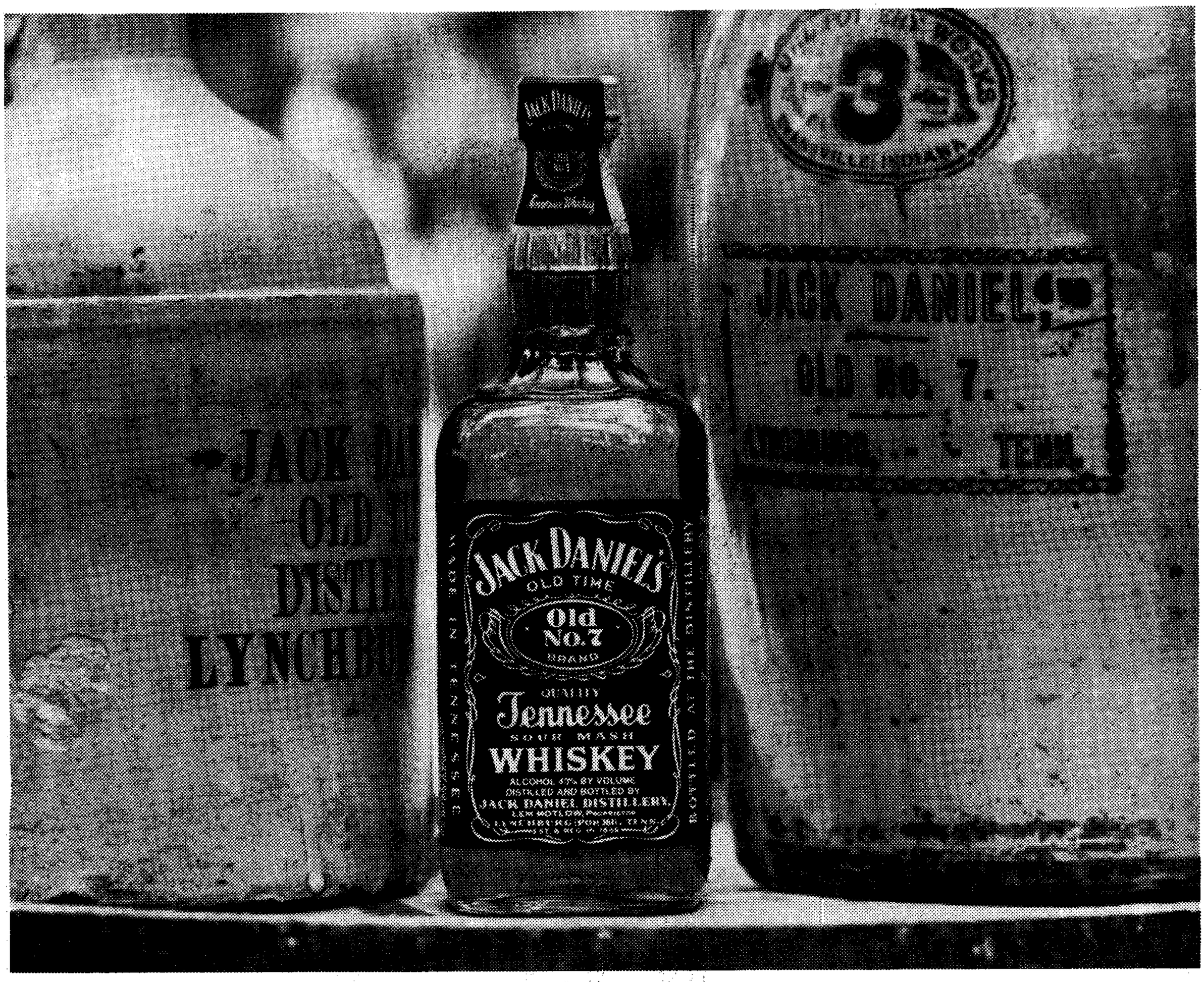

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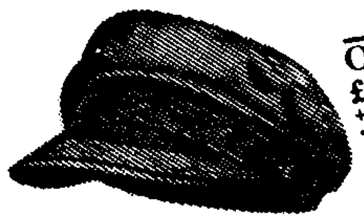

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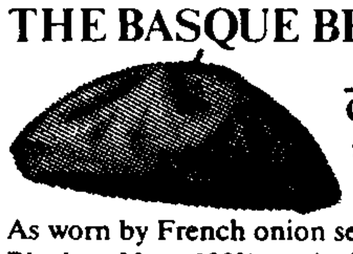

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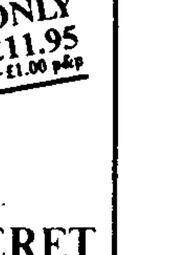

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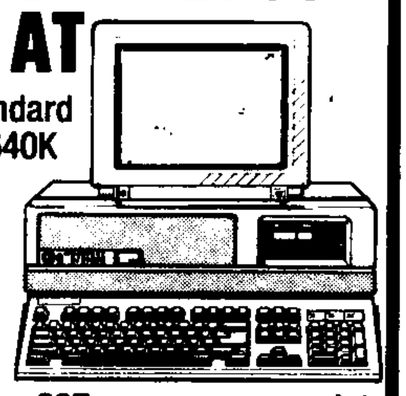

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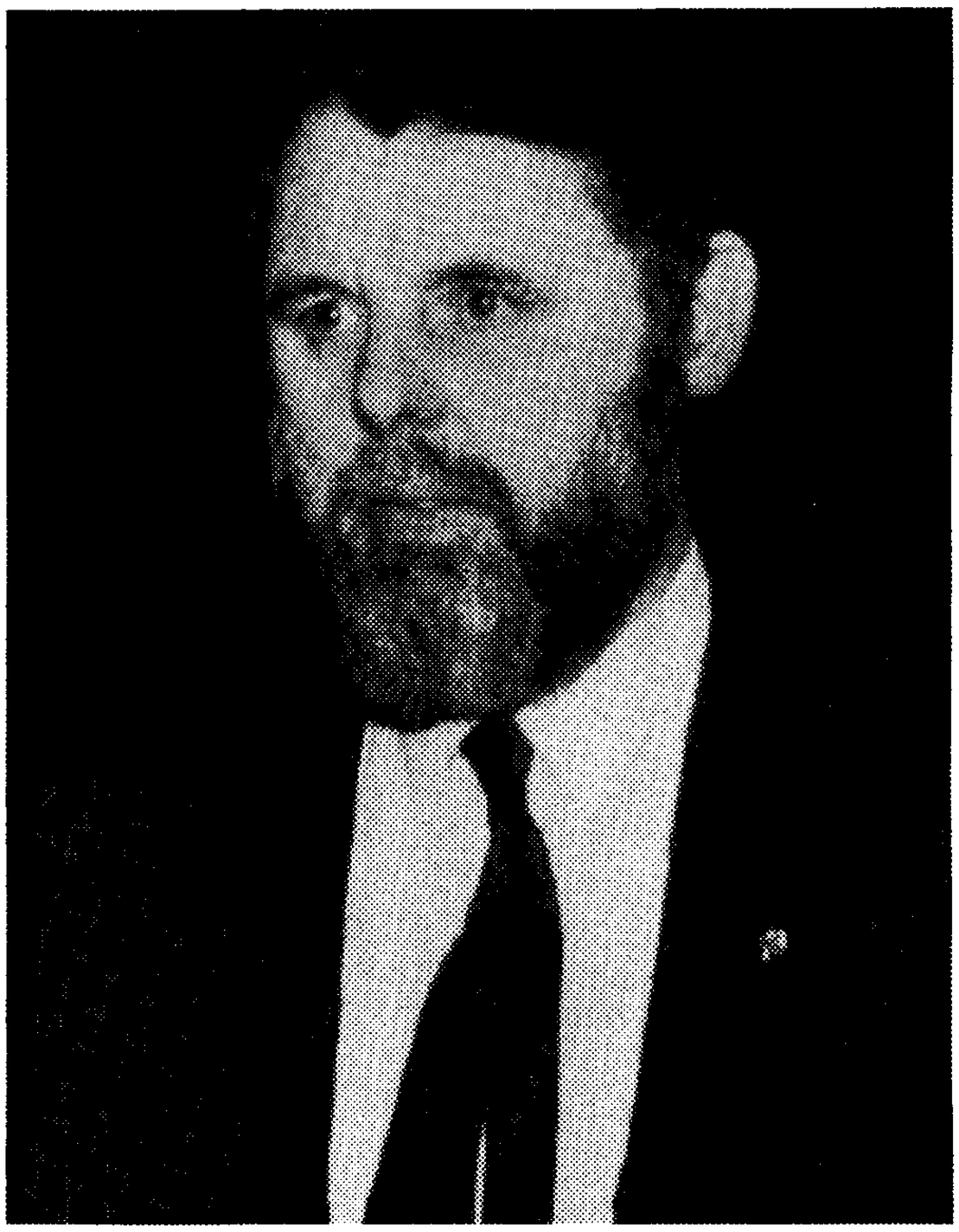
Waite's first involvement in hostage politics came in early 1981. He was sent to Iran as the archbishop's "special envoy" and secured the release of three British missionaries who had been held for six months for "spying." In November 1984 he was sent to Libya, where more Britons were being held by Colonel Qaddafi. The friendly, hefty Waite – he was now 250 pounds – paid several visits to Tripoli, and got on good terms with the mercurial colonel.

"At his first meeting with Qaddafi he couldn't fit into the tent," says Brent Sadler, a correspondent with Britain's Independent Television News, who first met Waite in Libya. "He hunched his shoulders and made a joke. He was very good at breaking the ice. He would always come up with something. He was a congenial man. He would always pay attention to the bellboy, the receptionist." Waite's initial visit to Libya had been low-key. His later forays were enthusiastically covered by the newspapers and television, much to his glee. "He liked the whole razzmatazz of media," says Sadler, who photographed the envoy accoutred as a TV cameraman on the Tripoli seafront. Naturally Waite dominated the press conference at Lambeth Palace, the seat of the archbishop of Canterbury, after Qaddafi freed the Britons. Waite took to his new prominence with aplomb, and the clerkly sobriety of his attire – an inexpensive dark three-piece suit, dark tie, black brogues (size 11½) – emphasized his sheer bulk. "He was a formidable object," Sadler says. He was also busy acquiring the deftness that his new prominence seemed to require, although sometimes the insecurities poked through. One friend remembers ordering lamb chops with Waite.

"At his first meeting with Qaddafi, he couldn't fit into the tent."



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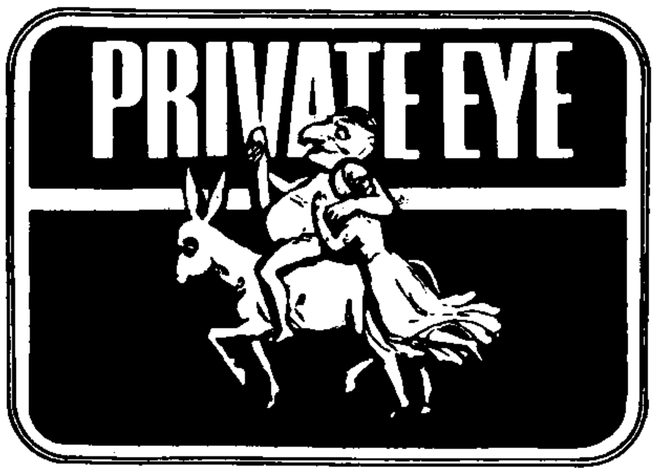


COLOUR SECTION

GULF NEWS

DID Saddam Hussein obtain nuclear triggers from the west or the components with which to make them? That is the question vexing authorities in the United States.

To a loud chorus of delight from US customs officers, nuclear triggers destined for Iraq were "seized" at Heathrow airport last year following an undercover operation (in the operation the real fuses had been switched with fakes). Although US customs officers boasted that none had got through to Iraq, it appears that — as usual — they goofed.

In Washington at the end of January Henry Gonzales, a Texan democrat and chairman of the House of Representatives banking committee, claimed that the Bush administration was attempting to cover up loans made by the Atlanta subsidiary of the Italian Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) to Iraq to buy war material worth more than $3 billion. Part of Mr Gonzales's complaint was that some of the funds, loaned between February 1988 and July 1989, were used to buy the nuclear triggers "discovered" at Heathrow.

The spotlight now turns to a company on Mr Gonzales's home patch in Texas, Tertron Commercial Enterprises, based in Dallas and with the apparent aim of trying to buy telephone and computer systems for Bulgaria. The enterprise is run by two Bulgarians — Mladen Mutafchiiski, who styles himself as minister of trade for the USA and gives his address as Sofia; and his associate Bojidar Petrov, who trades as Lotus General Tradinq in Taubstummengasse, Austria, and describes himself as a "diplomatic engineer".

The pair searched for technology far and wide throughout Texas and Minnesota and one company that unwittingly sold them computer parts was Honeywell. It has now been discovered that the parts they managed to buy were capable of being converted into nuclear triggers.

Considerable effort has gone into discovering just what might have been sent to Iraq via Bulgaria. But this time the US authorities are not prepared to let customs botch the job and have told investigators from the Department of Defense to get on with it.

ALTHOUGH it may appear the gods have smiled on British Aerospace in the Gulf war, the re-arming of Saudi Arabia will go the way of the Americans.

It has even been suggested that the BAe projects at the two Al Yamama airbases will be turned over to the US and that the Saudis' knocked-out Tornados will be replaced by American F16s.

Another worry for BAe must be that its own dealings with Iraq should remain secret. (In *Eye* 750 we revealed how Iraqis had been on training flights in this country using bogus Jordanian airforce papers.) BAe has much to be embarrassed about.

In the early eighties it prepared a feasibility study for an ambitious project in Iraq: an enormous complex of airframe and aero-engine facilities to be built just north of the city of Mosul.

The exercise was innocently referred to as "technology transfer", by which it was meant that duplicate factories were eventually to be built to manufacture the Tornado. Duplicate factories were needed because part of the plan was to hide some of them in the surrounding hills away from the prying eyes of the troublesome Israelis who had already blown Saddam's nuclear reactor to pieces.

The proposal was presented in 1983 (along with similar proposals from Dassault Breguet of France and Aeritalia of Italy) and the British Government and the export credit guarantee department gave their approval. How could it have been turned down when it was tipped at the time to be worth some six billion pounds?

However, at the end of the Iraq/Iran war, Saddam was short of cash and the project folded. But it did not trouble the Tories one iota that their pet company was hoping to help arm Iraq.

JUST WHO is helping to keep embargoed Iraqi crude oil on the move?

A prime contender is the sanctions-busting Swiss resident and American fugitive Marc Rich, whose organisation has for some weeks now been trying to charter oil tankers to put into the Jordanian port of Aquaba.

Rich, incidentally, continues to be one of the major oil smugglers to South Africa; but with all this talk of sanctions-busting in the air, how long can our old friend Adnan Khashoggi stay out of the picture?

In India there is currently considerable controversy following Khashoggi's recent visit and his meeting with prime minister Chandra Shekhar. Ostensibly he was there to try to facilitate loans to the Indian government from Saudi Arabia for the purchase of Saudi crude. The Indians, who have already turned down offers of Iraqi crude from Iran, were somewhat surprised then when Khashoggi revealed that he was actually selling several tankers of *Libyan* crude.

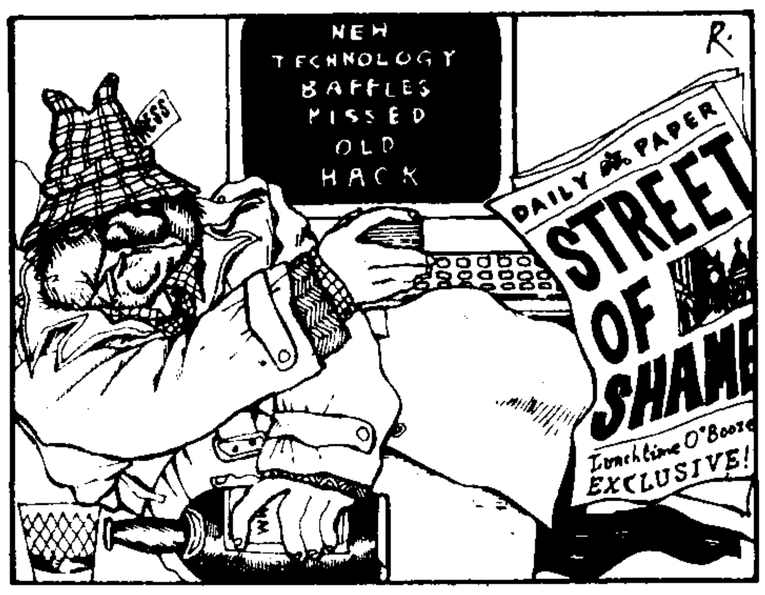
The Indians' apparent delight soon turned sour when it emerged that the crude oil was in fact *Iraqi* stock that was on *Iraqi* tankers taking refuge in Libya. Poor old Adnan goofed again.

KUWAITI human rights activists report that the exiled emir Al-Sabah has still not given any firm promise that he will return his country to democracy once it is liberated.

The portly freedom fighter has not even pledged to restore the pre-1962 constitution which restricted the electoral franchise to about 10 percent of the population. Hopes for a vote for the other 90 percent are even slimmer.

A BIZARRE new controversy has hit scandal-ridden Greater Manchester police two years after chief constable James Anderton's infamous rant about homosexualists and subversives "drowning in a cesspit of their own making".

Following the resignation of a top Manchester officer who had been accused of indecently assaulting a 24-year-old male gardener, senior officers have obtained an unusual list of male coppers which has sent the tub-thumping evangelist into paroxysms.



THE FIRST casualty of war is of course the truth — and no where more so than at Kelvin Mackenzie's two-faced *Sun*.

While the paper whips up and cashes in on war fever (*Surely "supports Our Boys"? — Ed.*), it was swift to condemn entrepreneur John McQueen, founder of a Friends of the Desert Rats Support Group, for seeking a £10 donation from those wanting his "information sheets".

These are simply newspaper cuttings cobbled together to give a round-up of events in the Gulf. The *Sun* was suitably outraged at such a blatant attempt to cash-in on war worries at home. But lo! What appeared on the same *Sun* spread alongside the paper's attack on McQueen? Why a puff for the *Sun*'s own Gulf Hot-Line, of course — a recorded version of the paper's drivel on lines supplied by the Murdoch Broadsystem subsidiary at 44p a minute peak rate!

The *Sun*'s own blatant attempt to cash-in did not go unnoticed for long. MPs, led by Labour's Terry Lewis, put down a Commons motion criticising the Murdoch rag for making money out of the phone lines, which simply provided information available in any newspaper or on the radio or TV.

The *Sun* publicly repented and promised to donate the profits to charity. But this was yet more double-talk. For the charity has turned out to be the *Sun* itself. Profits from the phone lines now "go towards providing free weekly copies of the *Sun* for our Gulf heroes".

These exports were started weeks before the phone lines. *All* British publishers are flying out newspapers and the *Sun*'s pledge to donate its profits was only made after the MP's protest. Clearly the paper that backs Our Boys has its own financial back to the wall.

SINCE the Gulf War began there have been several curious decisions to remove relatively innocuous programmes from our television screens because they might be construed as either glorifying or mocking war. Now, apparently, the newspapers are beginning to follow suit.

The William Hickey column of the *Daily Express* was all set to publish a story about *Daily Torygraph* editor Max "Hitler" Hastings and Sarah Lawson, Michael Grade's ex-wife. However, the story was pulled on the orders of *Express* editor Sir Nick Lloyd. Perhaps it will see the light of day once hostilities are over.

WHILE pining for the comfort of a slit trench in the Arabian desert, Max "Hitler" Hastings, *Obergruppenfuhrer* of the two *Telegraph* titles, has been fighting a rearguard action at South Quay Plaza itself.

Simon Heffer, the carrot-haired politico, has been busy sucking up to *Torygraph* proprietor Conrad Black as usual and a few weeks ago the pair entertained Enoch Powell to lunch in the *Torygraph*'s canteen.

Because Hitler regards Heffer's presence on the Isle of Dogs as sinister, he has decided to send him back to Westminster to write leaden and humourless parliamentary sketches once again. HItler meanwhile sits in the *Telegraph*'s special War Room ("it's got drinks and everything") looking at maps and overseeing the vital roster of hacks watching CNN.

THE *News of the Screws* had decided to kill Sally Ann Lasson's royal kiss and tell story (for which it had agreed to pay £40,000 on publication, not the £5,000 mostly mentioned) until *Daily Mail* diarist Nigel Dempster supposedly "came to the rescue" of Viscount Althorp.

On the Friday before the story was published (under the headline "Di's Brother Used Me As A Sex Toy"), *Screws* editor Patsy Chapman, deputy editor Paul Connew, managing editor Stuart Kuttner and legal manager Tom Crone looked disconsolate as they emerged from a meeting to discuss the Lasson story. Crone and Connew were overhead in the corridor telling features hackette Sharon Ring, who had spent days taking down Sally Ann's words: "Sorry, Sharon, you've done a good job but the proof isn't there. The libel risk is too great."

But then the *Screws* received its lucky break: "Charlie" Althorp confessed all to Dumpster for the Saturday edition of the *Mail*. Far from being the salvation of the wayward royal, Dumpster was his nemesis as it was his article that gave the *Screws* the excuse it needed to publish. Connew and Crone even contemplated biking a bottle of champagne over to Pratt-Dumpster to say thank-you.

THE *Sun*'s gay-basher Garry Bushell is in trouble again, this time over a set of scurrilous allegations linking him with the far right.

Bushell is emblazoned across the cover of *Searchlight*, the respected anti-fascist monthly, above the caption "Gotcha! Front's Chum on the Sun". Inside, a two-page piece accuses the *Sun* columnist of "attending social events organised by active Protestant groups... and attending the celebration of Lady Moseley's 80th birthday".

But Gazza, the "Voice of the Common Man", isn't too amused by *Searchlight's* vicious onslaught. When contacted by the *Eye* he first claimed to be someone else (a sure sign of creeping paranoia) saying: "I'm sure he won't want to talk to you," and then proceeded to refute almost everything of which he'd been accused in typical *Sun* fashion: "It's all absolute cobblers, a tissue of lies from start to finish... I don't want to bankrupt *Searchlight* but you can't allow them to print rubbish like this. Anyone who repeats these allegations will also be sued... I want a full retraction."

So, did he attend Lady Moseley's birthday bash? "Er, yes, but I went as a *Sun* reporter." And was he, as *Searchlight* claimed, the notorious Colin Sykes, author of a recent article in the National Front publication, *Lionheart*? "No, I'm not Bill Sykes or Eric Sykes!"

CASH-FLOW problems in the Dirty Digger's empire are so severe that *Mirabella*, the glossy mature woman's mag (selling so badly that the newsstand at King's Cross station — one of London's largest — has ordered no copies for next month) is proving reluctant to pay even its most meagre debts.

"Mind you, they're doing their bit for the circulation war"

However, this is not a problem if your name happens to be Sky Gyngell and your father is Bruce Gyngell, chief executive of TV-am.

Sky, who runs her own catering business, was badgering *Mirabella*'s accounts department to settle a £40 bill for the food at *Mirabella's* launch party a couple of months ago. Ms Gyngell was starting to threaten solicitors when the magazine's finance director, Tim Johns, told her that — just for that — he would decline to send her a cheque and she could damn well go ahead and sue the magazine for the sum owed.

Ms Gyngell politely explained that her father might not appreciate this and might have to inform his old buddy and fellow Aussie, Rupert Murdoch. The cheque arrived the following day.

THERE was a distinct air of cock-up in the 28 January edition of the *Daily Torygraph*.

Two days earlier the obituary had appeared of vice-admiral Sir James Keddon, a person unknown to the Royal Navy. But on 28 January the *Torygraph* carried an enlarged version of the same obituary — only this time the subject was vice-admiral Sir James Kennon.

Readers of the paper were given no explanation as to why the obituaries of two people with remarkably similar names and identical careers had appeared within a couple of days of each other.

CONGRATULATIONS to David Brewerton, until recently executive editor of the business section of *The Times*.

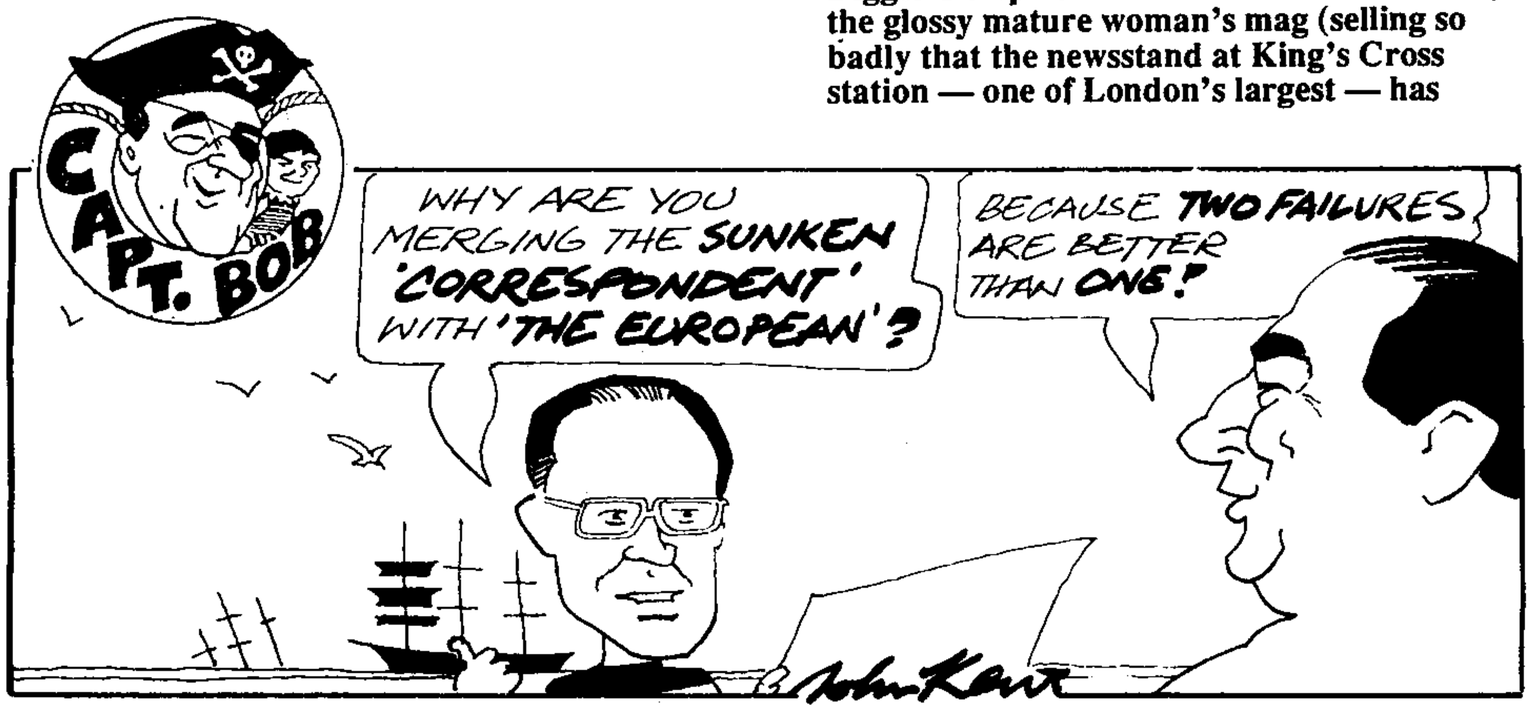
Noted for his ascetic qualities, Brewerton has been hired to join Brunswick, the financial puff merchants run by Alan (Son of Sir Peter) Parker, for a substantial six-figure sum.

On 15 January, two days after his new appointment had been announced, the comment slot that appeared beneath Brewerton's name contained some very positive remarks about a move to acquire Tootal by Coates Viyella. Peculiarly, no reference was made to the fact that Coates Viyella is a key client of Brunswick PR.

TOM MCGURK, of the *Mail on Sunday*, is no more. Known to colleagues as the Towering Inferno, McGurk seriously embarrassed his paper on a trip to Brazil last December.

He was sent to Rio to liaise with a photo journalist called Elisa Ramos on a story about the murder of street children. But in a five-page memorandum to the *MoS* picture editor Gary Woodhouse, dated 7 December, Ms Ramos complained that McGurk was rude to her, offensive to Brazilians as a race, tried to skip without paying her and knocked off other people's copy.

A series of internal meetings followed in which McGurk was eventually invited to jump before he was pushed. This he has done and will not be seen at the *Mail on Sunday* again once he has worked out his notice.



THE Conservative candidate in the Ribble Valley by-election, Welshman Nigel Evans, will no doubt prove even more of an embarrassment if he wins this safe Lancashire seat than if he loses.

At Swansea University, where he read politics, he was vigorously Conservative. When an East European student front organisation offered to subsidise UK students to go on a "study trip" to Cuba in June 1978, Nigel campaigned unsuccessfully to prevent Swansea Students' Union from taking part. However, when this failed he ran for election to one of two places on offer.

Flushed with this early victory he attempted, on his return from Cuba, to gain election as union president. In this contest, he was trounced not only by his opponent but also by a written-in candidate called "Nobody".

Standing as a Tory in the Swansea West constituency in 1987, he helped turn his opponent's 5 per cent majority in 1983 into a 15 per cent majority — the biggest Labour majority in that seat since 1945. He also stood in the Pontypridd by-election, coming in third place behind the Welsh Nationalist. Nigel's first leaflet in the Ribble Valley campaign referred to this as a "good result", thus demonstrating that Evans is fluent in Bakerspeak (a language invented by the former party chairman).

The same leaflet described Evans as a "businessman". This is pushing it somewhat, even in John Major's classless society. Nigel runs a corner newsagent's on the Town Hill Council Estate called "Evans the News". No doubt a talent for exaggerating one's achievements is an ideal qualification for a Conservative by-election candidate.

ALTHOUGH it is only a couple of months since he resigned and was knighted, Sir Bernard Ingham, the Leaderene's former press secretary, has been busy with his memoirs that will be published by the Dirty Digger's HarperCollins.

Sources close to the Yorkshire Sewer say that he has so far gushed forth 120,000 words — and has only just reached 1979.

SHOULD Kinnochio win the next general election he need not look far to find an unhelpful press secretary.

During the Gulf War little-known party hack John Underwood has assumed the role of Labour's "media co-ordinator", sending newspapers and broadcasting organisations a memo instructing them to go through him if they want to speak to a Labour MP, no matter how insignificant the question.

Yet Underwood has not always been keen to encourage informed comment from the party hierarchy, as one London radio station, which must remain anonymous for its own safety, discovered.

With time running out before an hourly bulletin, the station contacted Underwood requesting an NEC member to speak on air about the war. Underwood returned the call 10 minutes later saying that nobody was available and an interview would be impossible.

Nonplussed, the station asked why no one was around at a time of international crisis, but Underwood refused to explain. They then asked Underwood whom he'd tried; he refused to say but added that he'd approached the "right spokesmen" (sic). The reporter asked if anyone else on the NEC would be available apart from these "spokesmen". Underwood remained tight-lipped. Is he training to become a red-nosed version of Bernard Ingham?

ULSTER NEWS

THE Royal Ulster Constabulary's stance on the connection between loyalist paramilitaries and drug trafficking in Ulster raises some interesting questions.

For example, if the Ulster Defence Association is, as we were told last week, a terrorist organisation now selling drugs to finance its operations, why do police *not* want to see it banned?

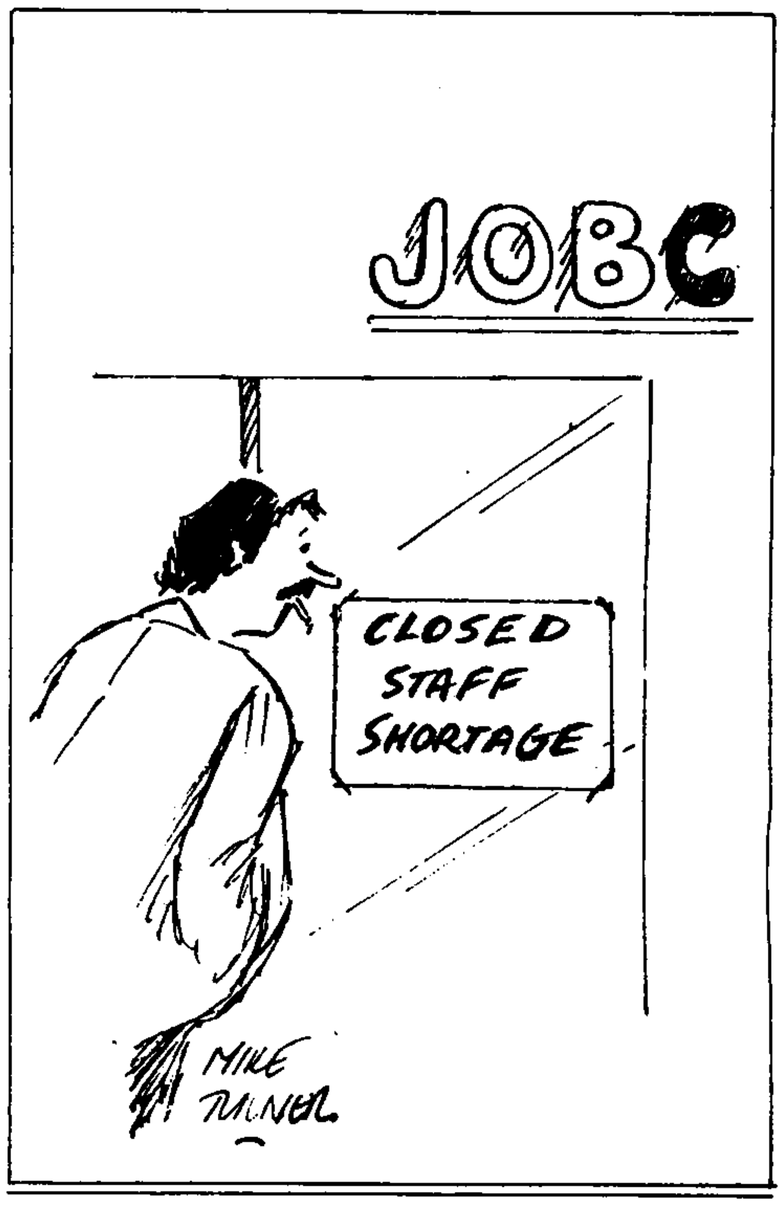
Despite starring roles in a number of grotesque murder trials, the Government has consistently refused to prescribe the UDA, citing objections from the RUC and the army. So why the criticism now — especially since the UDA's activities, many a great deal more menacing than the distribution of marijuana, have been known for years?

A likely explanation is that RUC special branch has lost control of the UDA. For many years, the UDA was completely penetrated by police agents who allowed it to operate protection rackets, punishment shootings, video scams etc, in return for comprehensive information on activities in loyalist areas. Unfortunately many of those receiving police pay got into the habit of bumping off members of the public or their business rivals.

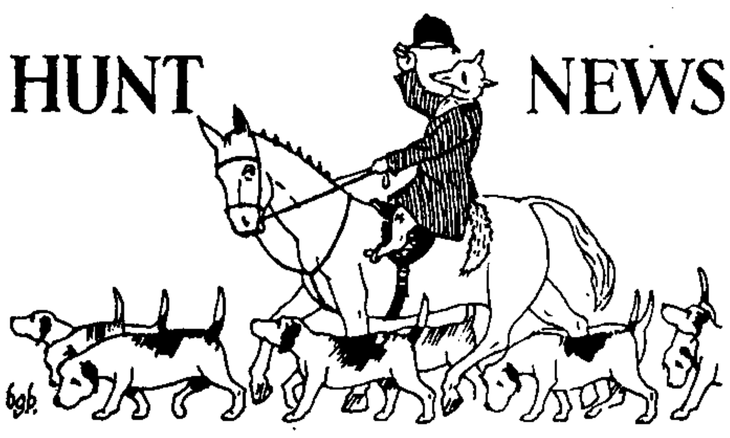
Over the last three years, internal feuding resulted in the death or hurried departure of most members of the UDA leadership. This undermined the RUC's ability to know about and influence future UDA operations, but paled into insignificance compared to the effect of the arrival in the province of John Stevens (see *Eyes passim*).

This resolute and inquisitive Cambridgeshire copper has ignored heavy hints that he's exceeding his brief and has continued to investigate security force involvement in numerous shootings. These inquiries have taken him from the barracks of the horribly discredited Ulster Defence Regiment (at times almost a UDA subsidiary) and into Belfast's Crumlin Road prison, probably the only safe haven in Ulster for Brian Nelson, UDA intelligence officer and civil servant.

Regardless of the truth of Nelson's allegations about state assassinations, his cooperation with Stevens has been the last straw for many younger loyalists. With the surviving UDA leaders largely tied up defending themselves against receiving information charges (Stevens again), a dangerous power vacuum developed. The new generation of terrorists has now arrived, and being less mercenary and more casually violent than their predecessors are thus largely out of the RUC's reach.



HUNT NEWS



THE SURREY Union Hunt, which has gained a certain notoriety in these pages for seeking to sue for libel those anti-hunt campaigners who write indignant letters to local newspapers, has found its way into the local press for other reasons.

At a couple of meets in early January, local hunt saboteurs were injured after encounters with members of the Surrey Union. Andrew Tuck was sitting on a fox-hole at Madgehole Copse in the hope of preventing huntsmen from digging out a fox which had gone to earth, when a huntsman rode his horse at Tuck twice. The second time the horse's hooves hit Tuck on the head and back. He was taken to the Royal Surrey Hospital.

On another occasion, a group of saboteurs followed the hunt to a point where it appeared that a fox would be dug out. Suddenly, a bunch of thugs poured out of the back of two Land Rovers and attacked the saboteurs with clubs. Seven saboteurs needed hospital treatment.

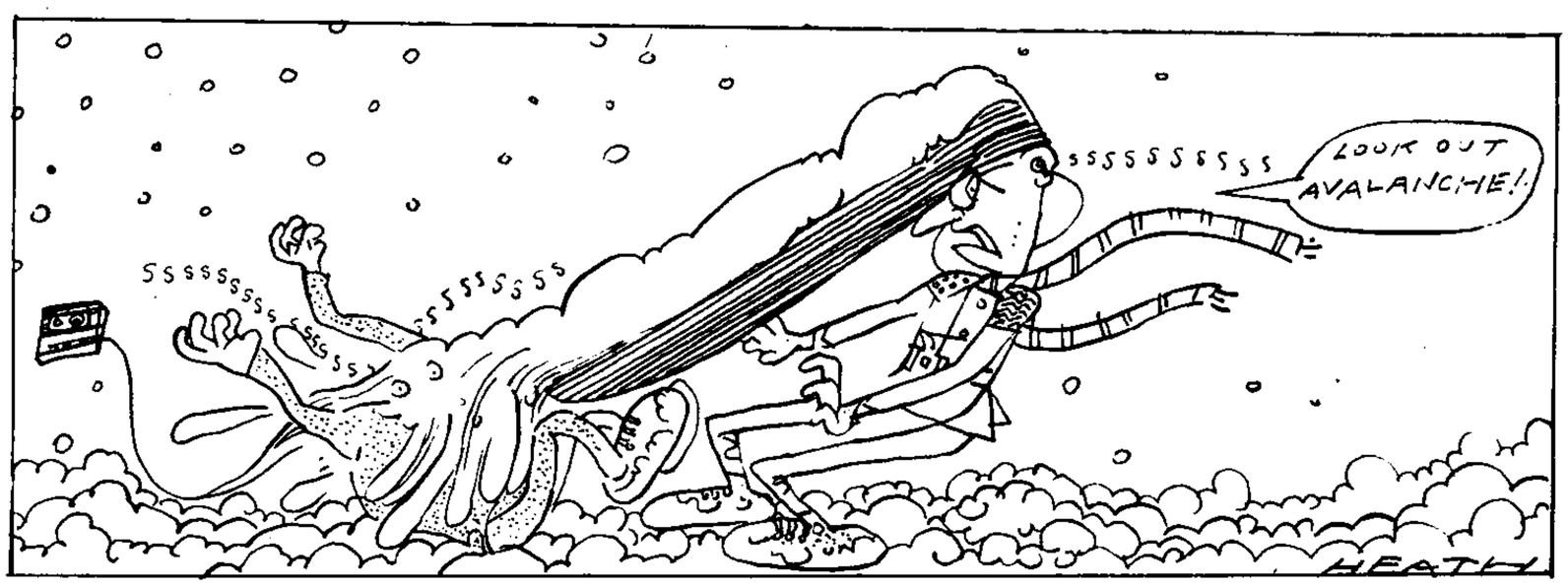
THE ISLE of Wight Hunt's professional huntsman, Stephen Clifton, will be in court next month to face charges of badger-digging.

Meanwhile Stephen Thayne, kennel huntsman with the Chiddingfold, Leckenfield and Cowdray Hunt, is shortly to face a charge of actual bodily harm at Chichester Magistrates Court arising out of an incident in which he allegedly rode down a young female hunt saboteur, causing her bruising and lacerations.

At the same time Jeremy Wayley, master of the Chiddingfold, Leckenfield and Cowdray who also doubles up as amateur huntsman (because his hunt doesn't employ a professional huntsman), is facing a civil writ for damages from two female hunt saboteurs. The claim is for trespass on the person and arose out of Wayley's attempt to make a citizen's arrest, allegedly without cause.

NUMERO UNO

MICHAEL HEATH



Grovel

MY DINNER companion Sally Ann Lasson has been unjustly traduced of late, I believe.

Sally Ann has always thought that English men are emotionally retarded — they "have potatoes up their bottoms", she once told me in a moment of intimacy. Speaking for myself, I have never had any doubt that Sally Ann is a true lady, however, because she always insists that her men should pay for dinner.

What is more, I am glad to see that nobody has seen fit to use the word blackmail in describing Sally Ann's threat to kiss and tell on Charlie Althorp unless he agreed to help finance some business project of hers. Surely, such terminology would be grossly in excess of the occasion.

Meanwhile, Sally Ann's past conduct continues to excite metropolitan society. I am told that her ex-husband Dominic King was perfectly sane before he married her, but that he ended up thinking she was a unicorn.

Another source recalls an occasion when Sally Ann took a group of friends back to her Knightsbridge house after dinner at a nearby restaurant. As soon as they entered the building, she turned to them and raised her skirt. "Well boys, do you want to fuck me now or later?" she inquired joshingly. Ahh, the wit!

● *I READ Linda Lee Potter's outpourings in the Daily Mail on the Sally-Ann Lasson saga hoping for moral guidance. Unfortunately the article is of the usual pisspoor standard.*

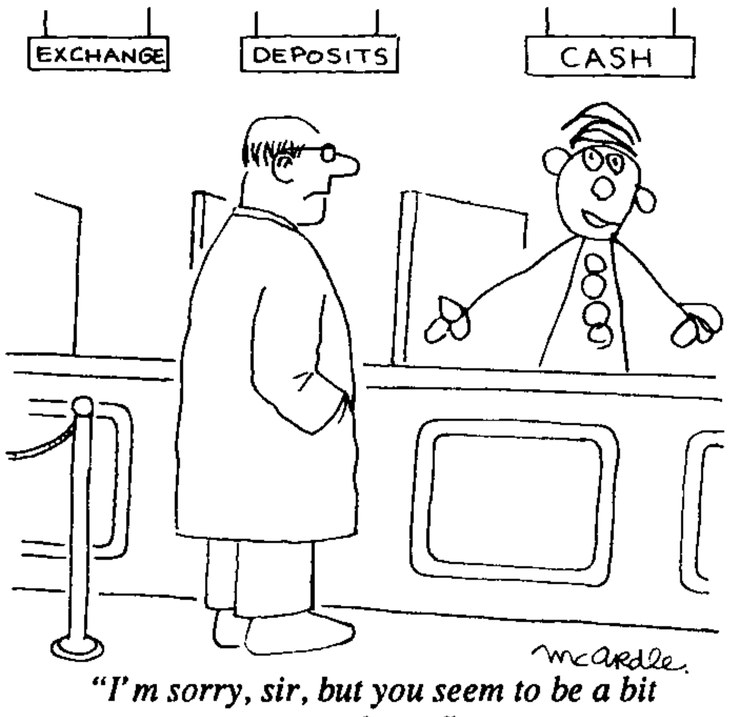
The rag's chief Glenda Slagg high mindedly takes Sally-Ann to task over her liaison with the Althorp thickie and grandly dubs her a "greedy little trollop".

But trollops, like humbug, sell newspapers, as Lee Potter and the Daily Mail know only too well: it was Lee Potter, for example, who conducted the entire series of Pamella Bordes Super-Trollop interviews at a cost of £150,000.

Pass the sick bag, Glenda.

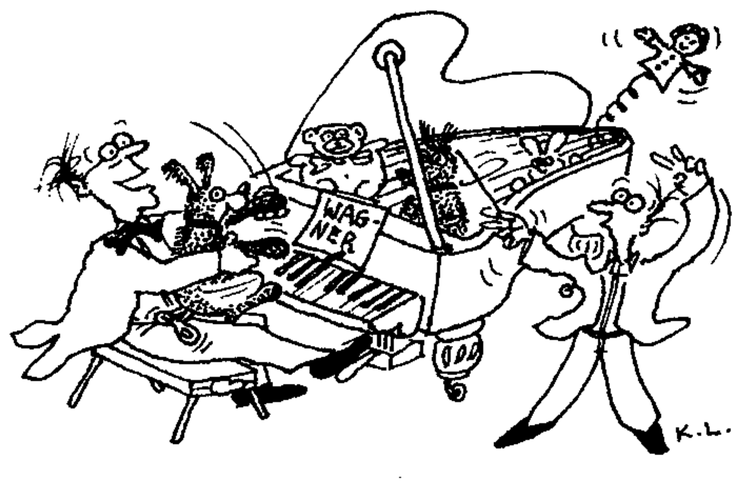
TO THE British Book Awards dinner where I am much tickled by the impish sense of humour of Peter Ackroyd, whose unusual biography of Dickens wins a prize.

Peter rises to receive his winnnings — a gold-plated nib mounted on a stand — and, quite bemused, asks the assembled throng whether he should wear it or sit on it.



"I'm sorry, sir, but you seem to be a bit overdrawn"

Pseuds Corner



Later, when I was a bit older, my father bought me a little toy dog called Toodles. And he composed a song for Toodles to play for me at the piano. It was just a little ditty really, but its execution was something else: Toodles's paws were too big to hit the keys cleanly and they produced the most wonderful banging tone-clusters. I've always attributed my love of contemporary music to Toodles's playing.

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS
Sunday Post

I wrote this article using a word-processor on the train journey from London to the Danube Valley near Ulm. I also reviewed a book, corrected three student essays, planned and partly wrote a long essay on Scottish nationalism and North Sea oil, and three shorter pieces, ate and drank well, saw some of the handsomest country in Europe, had a good night's sleep, and ended up with earnings that totalled twice my fare. The trip took a full 24 hours.

CHRIS HARVIE,
New Statesman & Society

SEMIOTICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE
Umberto Eco

This is one of the most important texts in the recent history of semiotics and the philosophy of language. It argues determinedly that the sign is the origin of the semiosic process and that there is no opposition between the "nomadism" of semiosis and the alleged stiffness and immobility of the sign. The concept of the sign must be disentangled from its trivial identification with the idea of coded equivalence and identity; the semiosic process of interpretation is present at the very core of the concept of sign.

Brochure: Academic Book Collection

'What was your mob?'
SIR — Have any other of your readers noticed that since the start of the Gulf war, there has been a vast increase of people wearing military ties?

I was thinking about this when travelling up to London by train yesterday. On looking down, I found that, I suppose instinctively, I was sporting my HAC regimental tie. I can only think that we are unconsciously showing our support for the troops, without any "gung-ho" or jingoistic motives.

EARL ATTLEE
Letter to Daily Telegraph

"Hey, killer! Thanks for being there, mate. Cool!"

NIGEL KENNEDY
(to elderly fan after concert)

CONTRIBUTORS: Barbara Butler, Liz Jensen, Simon Kaminsky, Vincent Walsh, S.M.

£10 paid for entries

TO THE Brixton studio of artist and reprobate Martin Fuller for drinks and cabaret.

Anthony Haden-Guest, over from New York to promote the launch of *Vanity Fair*'s UK edition, is on impressive form. At the mention of an ex-girlfriend's name, he clutches his throat with one hand, emits a blood-curdling gurgle as if being poisoned, sinks to the ground and in so doing empties a glass of champagne over himself.

The occasion is unexpectedly enlivened when tired and emotional hack Anwer Bati starts to taunt another male guest. The man extends his lion's paw and languidly slaps Bati to the ground — the most entertaining cabaret turn I've seen in years.

THERE HAS been an absolutely glorious to-do among the Hampstead set over the alleged affair between widowed modernist architect Norman Foster and Sabiha Knight, wife of the Dirty Digger's chief hatchet-man, Andrew "The Black" Knight.

In a press statement recently, Andrew explained that all was well in the Knight household and that Foster was a valued family friend.

Sabiha is convinced that this nasty rumour has been spread by Simon Jenkins, the editor of *The Times*, who has been listening rather too unsceptically to the whisperings of his confidante, BBC newsreader Anna Ford. La Ford was going out with Foster until some months ago and she apparently blames the influence of Sabiha, an old friend of the architect's, for bringing the affair to an end. I understand that Sabiha has been glimpsed hissing at La Ford during dinner parties.

In a hilarious footnote to the non-scandal, a *Daily Mail* hackette doorstepped Ruthie Rogers, wife of that other trendy modernist architect Richard Rogers. "Did you know that your husband has been having an affair with Andrew Knight's wife?" the hackette inquired. The *Mail* had put the wrong suspect in the frame, but a distressed Mrs Rogers had to be reassured by Sabiha Knight that it was all a mistake.

● *I UNDERSTAND that Sunset Times editor Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill has been turning his romantic attention towards the formidable India Knight, Andrew's daughter.*

Neill was shocked when India's father suddenly said in an executive meeting: "I understand you're trying to take my daughter to dinner." Neill blanched and gulped before awkwardly making excuses for his behaviour, while the Black Knight was inwardly laughing. Given the strident views expressed in Neill's paper about people having fun while there is a war on, he might well have set an example himself.

Meanwhile, I notice from recent television appearances that Neill's brillo pad hair has been growing ever more luxuriant. The explanation has been supplied by a recent visitor to Neill's Onslow Gardens abode who tells me that his bathroom contains a bulk supply of a special hair thickening lotion from Geneva.

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

IN *Eye* 723 I recounted the unusual case of Canon D.N. Gibbs, the ardent Thatcherite clergyman who had employed Donald Buttress, Surveyor to Westminster Abbey, to add a massive and inappropriate extension to his church at Cantley entirely without planning permission and listed building consent. In that issue I also referred to the good Canon's concern to assist the asset-stripping and monetarist policies pursued by the Diocese of Sheffield by doing his best to run down the parish of Christ Church in nearby Doncaster. Now I learn that he is succeeding in that public-spirited resolve.

Christ Church is a handsome Commissioners' church of 1827-29 by William Hurst with a most unusual tower. It stands in a large churchyard towards the west end of the town. Since the old parish church of St George has been effectively isolated by a disastrous inner relief road and a vile Arndale Centre, Christ Church has become a more important place of worship as well as a landmark and an oasis in the most attractive part of Doncaster (and a Conservation Area). For the Diocese, however, it seems to be merely a tiresome piece of plant occupying a site best sold for commercial use.

This suggestion was first made in 1986, despite the fact that the incumbent, the Revd R. Mark, had recently spent £80,000 on refurbishing the interior. This caused alarm locally, so the Bishop insisted that: "No decision at all has been taken that remotely makes likely the demolition of Christ Church." But, of course, if you believe a Bishop, you believe anything, for the Church of England has long experience in getting rid of buildings and knows that the most effective way to achieve redundancy is to run down and demoralise the life of the parish. So, when Mr Marks retired in 1989, Canon Gibbs, Area Dean of Doncaster, was put in as priest-in-charge with the mission of closing Christ Church as soon as possible.

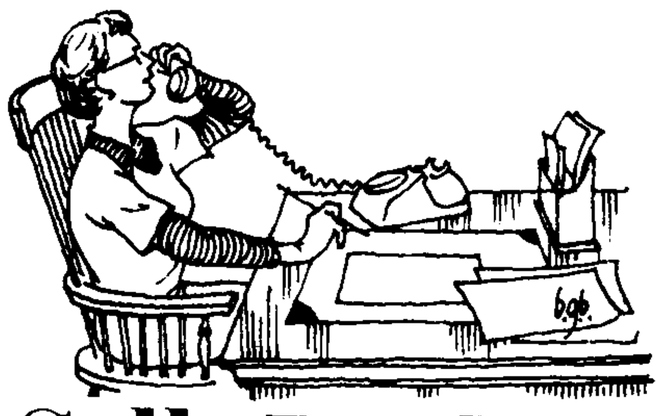
Naturally the first step was to show that the church was falling down, so Ron Sims, dim successor to George Pace, was wheeled in to announce that £850,000 was needed to restore Christ Church. The architect sent by English Heritage, however, estimated that the cost of repair was only £196,000, of which only £54,000 was needed urgently. Furthermore, the English Heritage Churches Advisory Committee considered that the building "is outstanding and consequently eligible for grant aid towards the cost of repairs as long as the building remains in use for worship" — and this could be up to 40 per cent. Naturally, with the deviousness and insistence on secrecy that so often characterise the inner workings of the Church of England, the Parish Church Council were not informed by its pastors of this. And, of course, the Diocese was utterly unimpressed by the fact that the Church's own Council for the Care of Churches reported that Christ Church "is a building which should be seen as a positive asset to the Christian ministry in Doncaster".

But Canon Gibbs is a resourceful chap, blessed with that contempt for convention and for the feelings of ordinary people that characterise his heroine, Lady Thatcher. In May last year, local residents asked the Canon if the neglected churchyard could be properly maintained. "No," he replied, "but if anyone feels strongly about the state of the grounds etc, they are very welcome to cut the grass and tidy up." So the Doncaster Civic Trust arranged to do precisely that, but as soon as the volunteers arrived, a Churchwarden objected and Canon Gibbs then forbade any work being done in the churchyard. He has now persuaded what remains of his flock to agree to closure and move from a Grade II* listed building to a converted Baptist church hall nearby. "He now prayed that the church would be demolished," reported the *Doncaster Star*, And how very effective is prayer: Christ Church is now locked up, denuded of its fittings and abandoned to the weather and vandals to do their worst.

Canon Gibbs considers that the local authority only enforced planning controls at St Wilfred's Cantley because he is a noisy Conservative councillor and the Council is Labour (the planners are insisting that the horrid bright red tiles on Buttress's extensions are replaced — and the Canon says he will do no such thing and has provoked a local inquiry). He would not, of course, consider that opposition is more likely to be a response for his contempt for the law and for the "community" the Church pretends to be concerned about.

It is left to the local Civic Trust to maintain Christian virtues by insisting that Christ Church should be retained "to provide an uplifting environment for worshippers; to proclaim, with confidence, the continuing witness of the Anglican faith; to contribute positively to the environment and dignity of the town and, by its presence, to be an enduring reminder of a spiritual dimension to busy lives".

'Piloti'



Sally Deedes

WELLCOME, the multinational drug company that makes whooping cough vaccine, is the subject of a disturbing finding by one of Ireland's most senior judges following the longest medical negligence case ever heard in the republic.

Mrs Margaret Best, a mother from County Cork, had tried to prove that her 21-year-old son Kenneth's serious and irreversible brain damage had been caused by the whooping cough component of the company's standard Trivax three-in-one vaccine, the standard vaccine used in the UK and Ireland.

Mr Justice Liam Hamilton, president of the high court in Dublin, found that Mrs Best was mistaken on the precise dates of Kenneth's injection and the onset of his disability and therefore could not prove a connection between the disability and the drug.

But the judge also concluded after exhaustive evidence that the vaccine *may* cause brain damage in children — an embarrassing and serious consideration for the company which has fought cases in several countries to deny precisely that possibility.

Moreover, Mr Justice Hamilton said he was satisfied the company had known for years that the vaccine may cause damage in rare cases and had been less than honest in coming to court to deny it. The evidence that Wellcome knew the drug could cause brain damage comes from its own advisory literature issued in the 1960s and in which Wellcome warned of a very small potential risk.

Wellcome's determination to win the case was reflected in the amount of time and trouble it spent on it — eight weeks of evidence involving almost 40 witnesses (many flown from around the world) — which ran up costs of around £2 million. After 4,000 pages of transcript, judgement was reserved for 18 months.

In a further blow to Wellcome the judge also concluded that the company was guilty of negligence in releasing for use in the UK and Ireland a batch of the vaccine which had been inadequately tested and which was exceptionally powerful. Details about the drug batch coded BA 3741 of 1969, emerged in an embarrassing memo between two senior company figures dated May 1987 and obtained by the Best family.

In the memo the company described the potency of the batch as being three times the strength permitted in the US at the time (there was no UK maximum). The memo admitted the potency was "so high it would fail US requirements". It also described the principal test for the batch's toxic strength on live mice as "highly unsatisfactory" and stated that such a batch "would not have been issued after 1973" when new toxicity standards began to operate.

Nevertheless, the batch was released for use without any notification as to its characteristics. Fears have been expressed over the years that if the vaccine can cause brain damage, the risk is increased where the drug is more powerful. Specialists from California, Glasgow and Germany called by the Best family, variously described the company's decision to release the batch as "an extraordinary event" and "improper".

Counsel for the family, whose evidence was clearly accepted in large part by the judge, described the 1987 Wellcome memo as "a stunning admission of corporate guilt". The Best family meanwhile are not entitled to any compensation for the brain damage suffered by Kenneth Best and costs were awarded against the family. However, legal sources have indicated that Wellcome will not pursue the costs as there is no prospect of recovery: the Best family has a low income.

TV EYE

Sky News

THE PHENOMENON of urban myths is well-documented. A friend tells you of the friend of a friend whose friend's mother-in-law's mother died on a holiday abroad, so — now there's some explanation about prolonged French/Swiss death formalities, registrar closed for saint's day — they rolled granny up in a carpet they happened to have bought as a present and stowed her on the roof rack, returning her for burial to Blighty. Well, they get out at an Alpine café for a pot of grog and, what do you know, the roof rack is empty. Granny has slipped off.

There are many more such stories — for example, a fly trapped in a beehive hairdo mutating and tunnelling through the skull — but, always, the legend depends on having happened to an acquaintance's acquaintance. Now, we have a new urban myth. A friend tells you of a friend who has a friend who won a satellite dish in a competition and says that, although most of the stuff is crap, *Sky News* is good. Soon, the story is generally accepted: granny slipped off/*Sky News* is good.

But, like all urban myths, the one about the superiority of *Sky News* just doesn't add up if you examine it carefully. Certainly *Sky News* does have the merits of speed and accessibility, as a 24-hour news station bloody well should. But take, for example, the standard claim that a pure news channel allows you to "find out what is going on at any time of day or night". Up to a point.

In fact, unless you know when the regular news bulletins appear, it has been quite possible in these times of world crisis to switch on *Sky News* — or even the far more efficient and intelligent *CNN* — and find yourself watching for some considerable time a windy general discussion on the Gulf or a filler report on education in Saudi Arabia. The truth — which is that the best way to keep up to date with the state of the war at times convenient to the viewer has been through the excellent but unglamorous Ceefax (BBC) and Oracle (ITV/C4) services, which really do give the set-owner a news agency in their own home.

Of course a dedicated news channel like *Sky* does have the advantage of being able to broadcast a breaking story straightaway. *The Sun*, to choose a newspaper at something less than random, often makes this point. For example, on the day after the mortar attack on Downing Street it crowed: "*Sky News* scored a telly coup by being first to break the news of the No 10 attack... beating *ITN* and the *BBC* by a quarter of an hour..."

Well, yes, but what did *Sky* broadcast? With dramatic pictures, and breathless eyewitnesses, it conveyed an exhilarating sense that Something Had Happened but it was not sure what. Traditionally, journalism has prided itself on remaining at least one step ahead of the punter, but now there seems to be an assumption of virtue in the journalists admitting: we're as confused as you are, but we're doing what we can.

But this honesty can be dangerously irresponsible. In the early days of the Gulf War — when, seduced by the successes of *CNN*, all broadcasting organisations effectively became dedicated news channels — fast-reaction television reported as fact that Tel Aviv had been attacked by nerve gas and that the Israeli air force had scrambled across Jordan, thus leading the viewer to believe that Armageddon was imminent. Last week, the viewer to *Sky News* was not discouraged from the assumption that Palestinians had killed or seriously injured the prime minister and the cabinet. There would, perhaps, have been a certain merit in waiting until it was clear that it was, in fact, the IRA who had badly damaged a tree.

For some reason, it is only in television journalism that premature ejaculation is regarded as admirable. And, part from coming first, *Sky News* has not got a lot going for it. There is a terrible grumpiness in the Murdoch empire about the attention given to CNN. It had been calculated that *Sky News* would be beneficiaries of the Gulf War but, in fact, the recipient of all the praise was *Cable News Network* of America.

The problem is that *Sky News* lacks quality personnel. The newsreaders — strong teeth, weak quips — all look like receptionists filling in and the "pool" system in use in the Gulf, which gives *Sky* the use of the Martin Bells and Michael Nicholsons, has merely shown up the shabbiness of its standard pack, who are generally former down-the-order BBC reporters like Christopher Morris. The BBC might, it is true, promote Barbie-doll announcers like Martyn Lewis above their level, but it can also field massed ranks of Simpsons, Buerks, Hanrahans, Tullys.

So how did the urban myth develop? Firstly, via the current affairs cult of immediate news. Secondly, thanks to the wetness of liberal newspapers who didn't want to say that the *Sky* service was *all* crap. For example, *The Independent*, who should know better, recently ran a soppy piece about how *Sky* was better than *CNN* because it was more "viewer-friendly" and had phone-ins. Ring one of them up and tell them the story of the vanishing granny.

'Square Eyes'

"... and in the studio with me tonight to discuss military strategy is Johnny Thompson, who once owned an Action Man!"

MEDIA NEWS

DEMORALISED BBC radio staff are glumly confirming all their worst predictions about Radio 5, the shoestring sport-education-yoof-plus-any-old-repeats-from-the-World-Service Network.

Launched with barely a whimper of publicity and virtually no funding last August to accommodate sport, education, etc, after the Government announced plans to flog off several BBC frequencies to independent radio, experienced broadcasters forecast that the new station was casting its net too wide. And so events have proved. Punters merely wanting the racing results, for instance, find themselves tuned into chamber concerts, Open University lectures or programmes for the Under Fives.

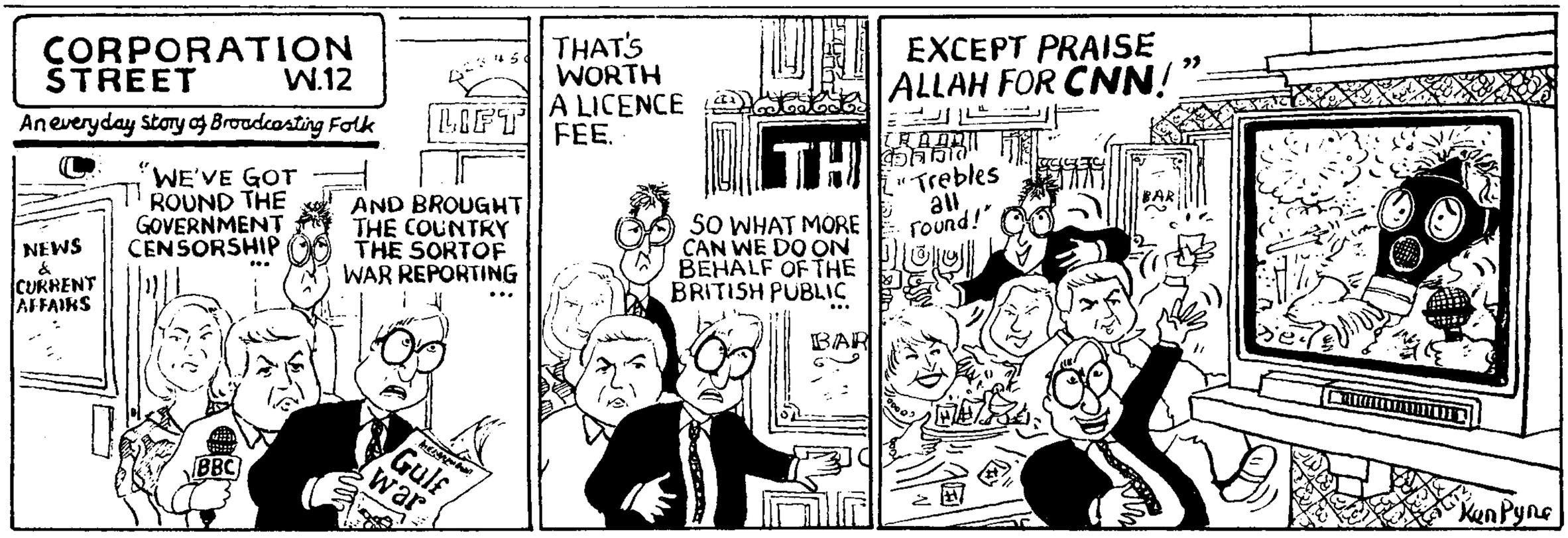
The appeal of this mish-mash can be measured by figures published last week. They show that after six months Radio 5 has achieved a ridiculous 0.8 per cent share of the total British radio audience, compared to Radio 1's 24.2 per cent and Radio 4's 11.6 per cent. Even Radio 3 achieves a regular audience of 1.3 per cent. So poor are the figures that most Radio 5 programmes do not even achieve the 100,000 listeners needed to register in audience research statistics.

Complacent BBC bosses have ignored demands from production staff for the shambles to be relaunched as a properly-funded network with a clear idea of who it is aimed at. David Hatch, managing director of BBC Radio, has said that he will not look at the problems for another two or three years.

However, at least some people are having fun at Radio 5. BBC hacks were astonished a couple of weeks ago to hear of a lavish birthday party thrown in the studio for Sharon, co-presenter of *On Your Marks*, a Saturday morning kids programme. "Sharon" is an imaginary goldfish.

MEANWHILE all is not well at Radio 4 where, as the Gulf War entered its fourth week, hacks realised that the round-the-clock coverage on Radio 4 FM, consisting largely of uninformed speculation about speculation by superannuated generals, was almost as big a turn-off as Radio 5.

Commonsense, and most senior BBC managers, suggested returning Radio War FM to normal schedules. Unfortunately it is the apple of deputy director-general John Birt's crazed eye — and the despair of Radio 4 controller Michael Green.


CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
LIFT
"WE'VE GOT ROUND THE GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP ...
AND BROUGHT THE COUNTRY THE SORT OF WAR REPORTING ...
NEWS & CURRENT AFFAIRS
BBC
Gulf War
THAT'S WORTH A LICENCE FEE.
SO WHAT MORE CAN WE DO ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC ...
BAR
EXCEPT PRAISE ALLAH FOR CNN!"
"Trebles all round!"
BAR
Ken Pyne

JANET STREET-PORTER, the BBC's director of youth programmes, must have been disappointed to read a survey of her department's output for the second half of last year which concluded that "...all sections of the audience give low scores".

The only programme in her DefII "Yoof" slot to reach the average BBC2 audience appreciation level of 73 per cent was *Behind The Beat*. This programme also gained critical acclaim and was a shining example of the equal opportunities policy Street-Porter bangs on about so earnestly whereby positions are advertised openly and publicly.

By comparison, its replacement *Dance Energy* is abysmal. This is hardly surprising since none of the founders of its the production company, Activate, have had previous television experience. The money-man behind Activate is rock promoter Harvey Goldsmith, an old buddy of Street-Porter's and promoter, incidentally, of the *Smash Hits* Awards which the BBC broadcasts. Activate's principal directors are a couple of ex-editors of *Smash Hits* and *Dance Energy*'s 24 year-old black presenter is Street-Porter's current toyboy, Normski — or Nobski, as he is mysteriously called.

None of the positions on *Dance Energy* were advertised, as series producer Jaswinder Bancil had to conced embarrassedly when quizzed by a *Grauniad* hack researching a story. Despite this admission, the *Grauniad* was persuaded to drop the story after the Beeb's head of publicity, Andrew Skinner, called the paper on Street-Porter's instructions.

WHAT ON earth was the explanation for the *Sunday Times*'s extraordinarily lengthy and vicious attack on TV-am?

Surely no one connected with Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill's newspaper is thinking of going for that franchise?

RADIO 4's *Loose Ends* has been steadily unravelling since Ian Gardhouse, the founder producer, moved to Channel 4 to join *Tonight with Jonathan Ross* and left the show in the hands of the ineffectual Charlie Bunce.

Once a menial clerk in News Information, Bunce has risen without trace within the BBC, his meteoric promotion seeming all the more astonishing because it has been accomplished *despite* his being the son of Michael Bunce, a high ranking executive in the BBC hierarchy. Worse still, Bunce has proved quite unable to control presenter Ned Twinky, leading exponent of bus-pass satire, who now effectively produces the programme himself, inviting on to it an endless pageant of his frightfully gay thespian friends.

Gardhouse, who lasted but a single week on the Ross show, returned to Radio 4, cap in hand, surprised to find that the BBC had found a suitable position for him. The man who steered *Loose Ends* through its award-winning years of critical acclaim was richly rewarded indeed: with a post as a researcher in school's education radio.

As for *Loose Ends*, it is rumoured that the axeman cometh.

THE high-powered intellects of BBC management have been in action again, introducing new methods to counter the threat of Middle East-sponsored terrorism. All BBC staff now have to go to work with their name and photograph prominently displayed about their person.

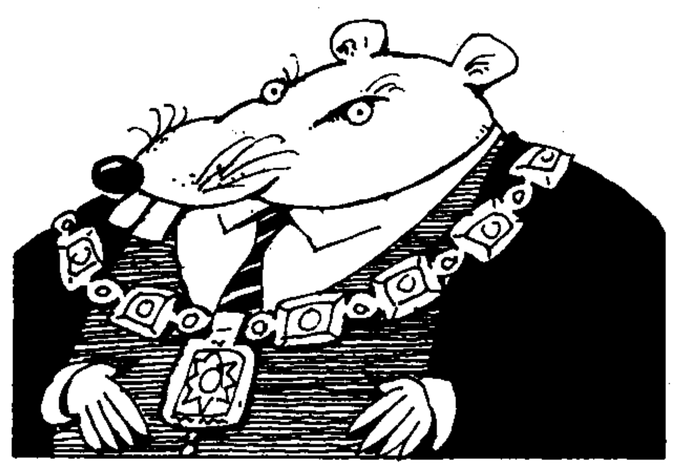
One member of staff has now spent several weeks going in and out of BBC buildings unchallenged, while clearly identifying himself visually and verbally as Saddam Hussein.

Another had equally little trouble in the guise of "Carlos T. Jackal". But this latter jape came to a sad end when the person concerned left his "Jackal" identity card at home and had to register under his own name. He was refused entry.

WHAT WAS Sir Paul Fox knighted for? Services to the Conservative Party, say the cynics who feel his broadcasting skills are more in the job-hopping than creative fields.

Fox is now off to a job with the Carlton outfit of Michael Green (another Thatcher fan) and their bid for the Thames TV franchise should be fascinating.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



BIRMINGHAM

THE lavatory habits of Birmingham's lord mayor-elect Bill Turner are under close scrutiny following an embarrassing incident involving his new plastic toilet and the district auditor.

Turner, who is also a magistrate in the city, has called in Inspector Knacker to unearth the mole in the chief executive's department who leaked the contents of a computer print-out which showed he had persuaded council officers to authorise contractors to install a new toilet in his privately-owned home.

The deal broke strict council rules which forbid work on private houses at the council's expense and no other private tenant in Birmingham would ever expect council workmen to equip their houses.

The deal went through via Alan Legge, the city housing officer, who ordered Pakefield Construction to install the £100 toilet even though Turner had bought the house from the council two years previously. When Alan Blumenthal, a Tory, heard of the deal he told the district auditor who ordered a full-scale investigation.

The city's chief executive, Roger Taylor, has limply explained that the work was compensation for water leaking from a council flat above Turner's maisonette — although that happened many months before and no compensation claim was ever submitted.

Turner, 59, a full-time student, has been investigated by the city's auditors once before after he wrote privately to his Labour colleagues asking them to award a £200,000 ironmongery contract to his then employers. The auditor said then that he had broken the national code of local government conduct and ordered the city to tighten up its tendering.

Turner escaped further censure, despite the sums involved, because his colleagues had ignored his letter and no money had changed hands.

BROMLEY

THE ROW OVER Bromley council's newly-privatised social services continues nearly six months after the hard-line Tory suburb handed over the running of its old people's and children's homes to commercial firms (*Eyes passim*).

Labour wants an independent inquiry into how the council lost £400,000 from the change-over when privatisation deals are supposed to increase income and decrease costs. A council bid to scrap the contracts and start again had to be abandoned because legal costs would have run up an even bigger deficit!

Surprisingly the district auditor cleared the authority of malpractice over the £400,000 loss, describing the cock-up as a "genuine error" which turned an estimated £397,000 profit into an £80,000 loss.

Instead, opposition councillors are turning their attention on a firm which won a £2 million, five-year contract from Bromley to manage homes but was insufficiently experienced to obtain a performance bond from its bank. Bromley's Tory leaders pursued the deal despite warnings from town hall solicitors about the financial agreement they had made with the firm.

SHEFFIELD

AS REVEALED in the *Eye*, next summer's World Student Games will cost hard-up Sheffield a packet: £25 million to run the events and a further £147 million to build the new stadia. But that is not all.

It now appears the council will spend £3 million refurbishing the notorious, abandoned Hyde Park estate to house the competitors — and once the games finish, another £2 million to demolish the flats! At around £66 per person per night the council might as well put contestants up in luxury, city centre hotels.

Thanks to the lack of sponsorship, the council will lose out no matter how many people attend July's events. A warning came from the first sports meeting held at one of the newly-built stadia, the recent McVitie's Challenge athletics event which cost poll taxpayers £28,000 despite a 21,500 crowd.

Some of the city's most hard-line Labour politicians have at last begun to question the council's folly in incurring so many decades' worth of debts just to finance a few weeks of sport. Hillsborough MP Martin Flannery wants the city to pull out before it's too late if the Government fails to provide substantial aid.

For now, the only winners look like being the banks who have loaned the city millions of pounds at excessive interest rates to finance the fiasco. The tournament is set to lose more money than any event in the history of British sport, but a recent delegation failed to convince environment secretary Michael Heseltine to throw more funds at it. As Tarzan said, the Government had already provided £12 million in indirect funding via the Sports Council and derelict land grants with a further £14 million coming from Euro funds and other grants.

Other financial beneficiaries could of course include Messrs Sue, Grabbit and Runne who have been enlisted by council leaders to consider libel proceedings against Granada Television following *World in Action's* programme about the Games' fiasco.

Peter Courtney

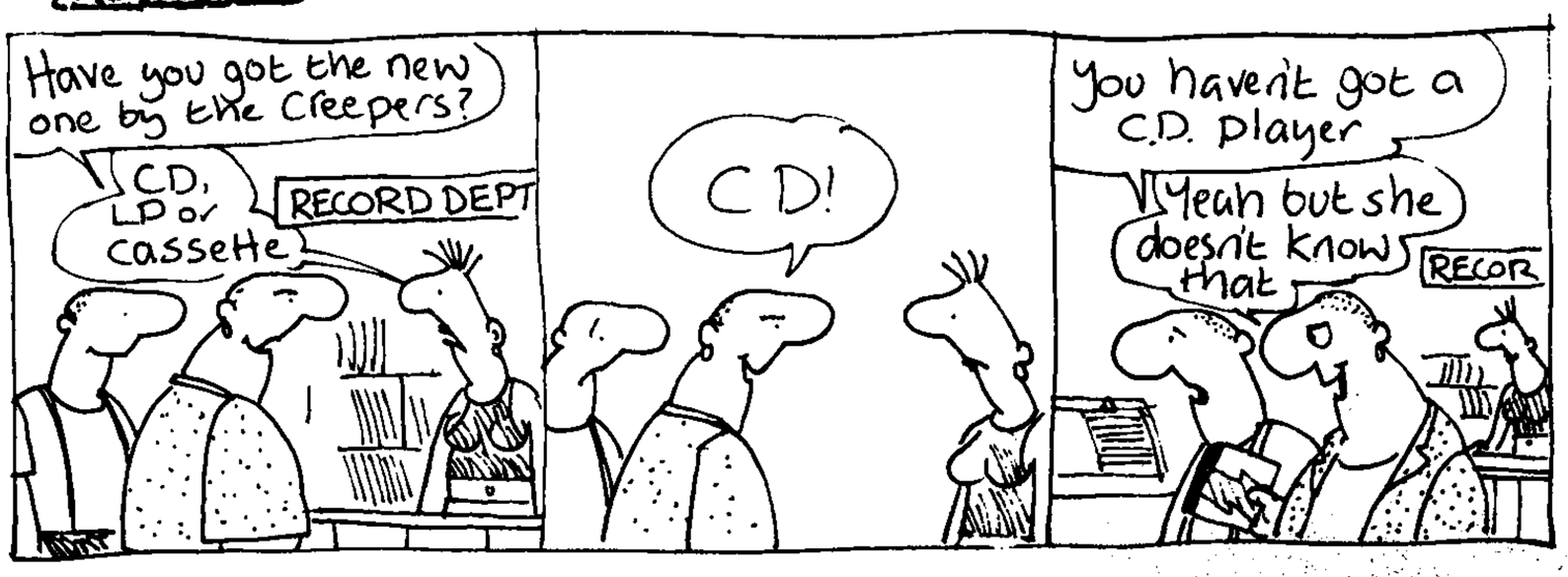
IN OUR issue of 18 January 1991 (759) under the heading "Sporting Life" we referred to Mr Peter Courtney, who was formerly with International Bloodstock Holdings.

Mr Courtney has stated that the article would be taken to mean that whilst employed at IBH plc he had allowed a cheque to be issued with the payee's name left blank. We are happy to make it clear that we did not intend to suggest any such thing.

Whilst not accepting Mr Courtney's interpretation, if the article has been misunderstood in this way then we unreservedly withdraw it and offer our apologies.

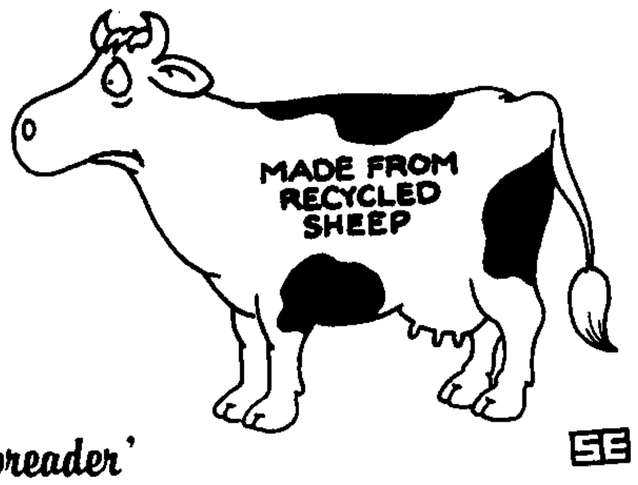
Yobs

HUSBAND


Have you got the new one by the Creepers?
CD, LP or cassette
RECORD DEPT
CD!
You haven't got a C.D. player
Yeah but she doesn't know that
RECOR

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'



THE BIGGEST ever foreign commitment to the British farming sector has just been made by Credit Foncier de France which is joining with the London and Edinburgh Trust, patron of ugly architecture, in a joint wheeze to get rich quick.

Like most good agricultural ventures it does not involve tilling any soil, planting any seed or harvesting any crop. Instead the French are taking over the Knightsbridge office block owned by the National Farmers' Union, and are asking that nice Dame Shirley Porter's councillors in Westminster to consent to office space totalling 91,000 sq feet. The NFU retains the freehold and everyone will get richer — and no one will have to muddy a boot.

THE SCOTS have just reported that the earliest known human turd has been discovered by archaeologists at Wereboth on Orkney.

The 4,000-year-old object seems to have been excreted by a Norse farmer who ate barley bannocks, oat cakes, deer burgers and pieces of cod. And the subversive suggestion is that in the far north there was a time when farming was done without subsidies.

Old Muckspreader urges a brave MP to ask Scottish secretary Ian Lang about the cost of excavating this antique bowel movement — or would that be too faecetious?

THE European Commission has received a heart-rending request from M. Louis Mermaz, the French agriculture minister, to block the surge of cheap *foie gras* that impertinent farmers in Eastern Europe are shipping west.

France produces 6,000 tonnes of goose liver paté annually and the pesky Bulgars, Magyars, Poles and Serbs are threatening to overwhelm the French producers at a fraction of the former Common Market costs. Something has gone wrong with the normally professional arm-twisting abilities of the French agricultural diplomatic service: the commission, usually craven in the face of French lobbying, has said it actually prefers cheap paté that is identical to the French variety.

The French are now trying to impose a directive that in future only the livers of drakes can be called *foie gras* and that the slightly less rich female's livers are merely ersatz.

Old Muck wonders who will win?

REACTING to Sir Richard Body's cheeky bill to liberate the pigs from their torturers, Grenville Wright, chief executive of the National Pig-breeders Association, commented tartly that the banning of tethers and stalls could add £3 to the price of a pig.

What Sir Dick failed to point out of course in his speech commending his successful private member's bill was that the behaviour of tethered porkers is directly comparable to that of Euro MPs.

Pigs struggle to get free for an hour; whimper sadly until they know nobody is listening; then they become interested only in eating and grow listless and aggressive — a state in which most vets then define them as mentally deranged by their purposeless life.

RAY MACSHARRY, the European commissioner who beguiles opponents with blarney and charm while his resourceful courtiers rig any debate, has dazzled his fans in Dublin with a completely new boon-doggle for the subsidy-hungry Irish peasants.

Now a new multiple compensatory amount — the ultimate green pound rip off — is to be used to subsidise the breeding of greyhounds. While the subvention is to be confined to the whippets found in the republic, the details have yet to be announced. Commission staff still have to decide whether to quantify the money in terms of the amount of sperm (as in bullock bollock subsidies), the number of testicles or possibly even the number of mountings or the number of progeny. All these offer exciting accounting possibilities.

Mr MacSharry is believed to want to return to Irish politics when he retires from Brussels.

UN NEWS

THE FIGHTING in the Gulf has set the marbles running loose in the skull of United Nations secretary-general Perez De Cuellar.

Overcome at his own temerity in suggesting that the UN may not *really* have intended the United States air force to bomb Jordanian truck-drivers, he was positively incoherent the following day. Asked if he still opposed the bombing, he responded: "I was referring to the bombing in Jordan of course but they were Jordanian trucks going to Iraq."

Bemused reporters queried this news: "But there has been no bombing in Jordan, has there?" he was asked. "I don't think so," he answered brightly. And when asked if he objected to bombing the trucks inside Iraq, he responded firmly, but confusingly: "Yes, because if it was proved, it is a violation of sanctions — but to bomb the trucks I think as a decision is a little too tough."

His dementia even proved too much for the UN press office, which usually prints and distributes his utterances faithfully. A press release was prepared and then killed.

Later the same day, a possible reason for De Cuellar's distress was revealed. The Iraqis had sent a transcript of his meeting with Saddam Hussein and threatened to make it public if the UN didn't. It appears that during the meeting he admitted that the action in the Gulf owes as much to the United States as to the United Nations.

FOOTBALL NEWS

ONCE PROUD Birmingham City is fast becoming an example of how not to run a football club.

Long stuck in the shadow of Aston Villa, its more illustrious neighbour, Birmingham was until recently a fixture in the first division. Today, however, after five years of mismanagement and incompetence, the Brummies are in Division 3 of the Football League for the first time in their history.

The latest disaster concerns a highly-unpopular identity card scheme for fans, introduced by new chief executive Annie Bassett who arrived from Reading FC last summer. To loud opposition and astonishment from the footballing authorities, she has decreed that anyone wishing to stand on the terraces at the massively-underpopulated St Andrew's ground must buy a computerised card on pain of confiscation in case of "trouble-making".

This marks something of a U-turn by club chairman Samesh Kumar, who in the past came out strongly against membership schemes. Last year, after a lengthy inquiry sparked by the Hillsborough disaster, Lord Justice Taylor rejected a national membership scheme on the grounds of safety and practicality, even though the directive had come from Thatch herself.

Yet not only have Kumar and Bassett persisted with cards, they have adopted a system described by supporters as the most inappropriate and time-consuming possible. Most schemes require the punter simply to pass the card through a computerised "reading" machine. At Birmingham patrons must first hand the card to a turnstile operator who does the job for them as well as taking gate money and giving change. The cards bear neither the name nor the photo of the card-carrier and can be swapped around at will — so much for identifying miscreants and keeping out undesirables!

The West Midlands branch of the Football Supporter's Association submitted a report to Birmingham city council's public safety committee claiming that the turnstiles would not be able to cope with between 10 and 20 entrants per minute as recommended by Taylor. In fact, a random check showed that only six or seven people were passing through every minute.

With attendance figures up around the country, gates in Brum have plummeted to around 5,000 against a break-even figure of 10,000. And the club doesn't even seem that keen on its card scheme itself. For the match against Southend earlier in the season it was abandoned a few minutes before kick-off due to the queues! And astute supporters have found a loop-hole: sitting in the Railway End which is not covered by the scheme. But at one recent game gangways and exits there were completely congested. So much for safety.

POP-EYE

GUN-TOTING drug warlords have closed Manchester's Hacienda nightclub, the world's most happening place, according to "style" hacks.

An alternative view is that the latest twist in the club's controversial history is just another bizarre publicity stunt engineered by owner Tony Wilson which can only add more notoriety to the infamous Manchester "rave" scene.

In May 1982 Manchester pop maestro Wilson, a cult TV presenter and doyen of super-hip punk label Factory Records, opened the Hacienda in a cavernous, disused warehouse in central Manchester. Accompanying the launch publicity was the enigmatic catchline: "The Hacienda must be built", lifted from the little-known works of the Situationist International, a bunch of wacky, avant-garde French revolutionaries and chaos merchants crucial to post-1960s alternative lifestyles.

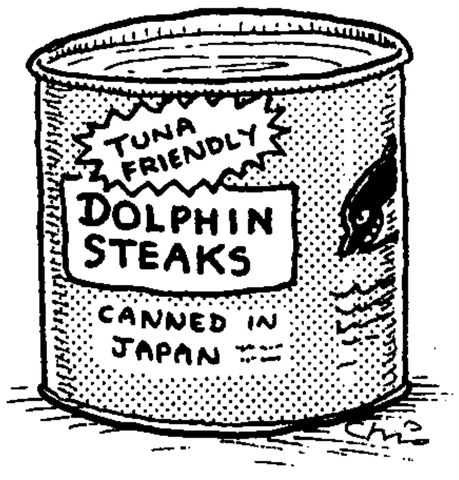
Wilson lifted other ideas liberally from a variety of radical chic sources. The name of his Factory Records label, now home of the 1990 England World Cup band New Order, tied in neatly with the Situationists' call to "occupy the factories". The Hacienda itself was pretentiously given a catalogue number, Fac 51.

New Order's name coincided with the term the Third Reich were to use for their regime following the Final Solution; Joy Division, the band from whom New Order sprung, was also the name which had been given to concentration camp prostitutes in Nazi Germany. Wilson himself was slightly more confused: "My number one hero is Colonel Gaddafi, for his sense of style and achievement," he told an interviewer in 1989.

Sadly, it seems, after nearly 15 years of flirting with a variety of outlaw chic poses, Wilson has found that he can't cope with a real-life "situation", closing the club after months of outside violence which culminated in one hood pushing past the bouncers brandishing an Uzi sub-machine gun before 1,000 punters on a Saturday night at the end of January.

But why would Manchester's villains choose this ultra-hip venue for their loathsome practices? In recent years the club had almost single-handedly activated the new British rave scene, central to which were the new-wave designer drugs — followed by the drug gangs. Although obviously no toking ever took place on the premises, a 16-year-old girl died outside the club last year after taking too much of the scene's fave drug, Ecstasy.

Ironically, a recent attempt by Greater Manchester police to close the club for alleged drug-taking had only just been over-turned by magistrates who gave management until July to sort things out. Remarkably, Knacker now wants the Hacienda to remain open so that he knows where the most violent gangs are likely to turn up!



POLICE 5

WITH THE Birmingham Six scandal fresh in everyone's mind, yet more evidence emerges of cover-ups within the West Midlands police force — this time concerning the shooting by police marksmen of pregnant teenager Gail Kinchin.

Gail was killed in 1980 while being used as a human shield by her boyfriend, David Pagett. He was jailed for 12 years for manslaughter and the police were publicly absolved of all blame for what later emerged as a massively bungled operation.

Gail's mother, Josie Woods, was one of the few to question the police record — and she pursued the truth through the courts for 10 years. On the penultimate day of the hearing last December her lawyers suddenly spotted an obscure reference to a damning internal police report into the shooting.

Hidden for more than 10 years, it was produced the next day in court. Written by assistant chief constable Tom Meffen, it condemned the police handling of the seige and several of the officers involved.

Patrick Bennett QC, for the police, said he "had no explanation" for the police failure to disclose the report. Mr Justice Hodgson awarded damages and costs to Mrs Woods and ordered an independent inquiry into the cover-up — without which the case would have finished years before.

The West Midlands Police Authority asked Hugh Carlisle QC to find out how Meffen's report could have been suppressed for 10 years. But the inquiry came to a strange and sudden end late last month when Bennett, after consultations with his police clients, suddenly changed his mind. He went back to court, said it was his fault the report was never disclosed to Mrs Wood, and apologised. The judge accepted his apology, absolved the constabulary of — heaven forbid — the cover-up he had previously suggested, and recommended ending the inquiry.

The police authority members who had initiated it are not chosen for their intellect, insight or individuality as the record of the force they allegedly control — witness the John Shorthouse killing, the Birmingham Six and the dozens of other fit-ups by the disbanded serious crimes squad — has proved.

Even so, all the authority members knew that in the Kinchin cover-up *one huge question remained unanswered.* Only one member, Lynne Jones, a Labour councillor in Birmingham, dared ask it when the authority met last week. Why, given the existence of Meffen's report, did the police fight Mrs Wood's civil action if they knew they had bungled the seige?

Jones's questions were met with an embarrassed near-silence, ignored and the inquiry was formally wound up. Consequently chief constable Ron Hadfield, who decided to fight Mrs Wood, will never have to explain why; and nor will Meffen have to explain why his evidence in court changed so dramatically once the report appeared. He claimed he had "forgotten" writing it.

A critical inquiry report could have greatly damaged the West Midlands force just as the Birmingham Six case was coming to a head. Now, Hadfield keeps his credibility and Meffen keeps his pension.

Letters

Private Eye

Cartoon time...

Sir,

Firstly I am a serving soldier in Saudi Arabia with the RAMC (Royal Army Medical Corps).

My sister sent me your organ of which, until now, I have been a fan. I opened your organ to see your joke on page five and then on page seven (Numero Uno) both in your 18 January edition.

I am sitting here on the eve of battle wondering what may come next. I thought Private Eye might provide some humour to boost my morale: "I'll let my boys read it later, it'll cheer them up," I thought. I saw your cartoon of the undertakers awaiting at Heathrow with placards of soldiers' names on. I have a Corporal Jones and a Pte Smith; I don't think seeing their names made them happy.

On the next page was Numero Uno's reference to body bags. There aren't any body bags in Saudi as the soldiers won't be flown home. Saudi law says they should be buried within 24 hours. Anyway, any more than that inside a body bag and it explodes. [ILLEGIBLE — ED.] Also, if that ever-so-wronged and maligned man Saddam Hussein uses chemical agents against us, putting people into plastic bags will retain the chemical agents and may kill the War Graves Commission persons who come to register the bodies and place them in war graves.

As for your four horsemen jokes, if you want to think about that and the Apocalypse and Armageddon, just which side do you think we're on?

And as to Ged Smith, an ex-soldier, yes we do read Private Eye. But he doesn't speak for us. We're here to do a job, finish it and get home alive. As to his ideas on oil, he should look at the industrialised West's oil supply in terms of years and then at the Arabian peninsula's supply. When we run out, where will we HAVE *to go for oil? Arabia.*

If we didn't stop Hussein now he would have taken the Arabian peninsula, had all the oil, controlled OPEC totally and hence the world's economy. After all, you think that the only reason we're hear is to start the fourth crusade? WRONG! *Think on this. The only real area in the world that can cause devastation and continue human strife is the Middle East. If we can sort this area out, stop them killing each other, maybe, just maybe, there is a chance of world peace, who knows.*

Anyway I'm just writing to say that if you joined up and you could think how funny your jokes are when you are sitting in the sand miles from nowhere.

But don't just sit there and procrastinate and write with your holier than thou attitude. Consider the fact that some soldiers may not come back. We stopped making jokes about death when we stepped off the plane. We're here to do a job. Don't sell us out and make us feel like we've wasted our time. Just support us, we're your sons and daughters out here.

K.E. COMLEY, SGT.

Saudi Arabia.

Sir,

Re: issue 759, with Saddam Hussein on the cover and the infamous "Heathrow Arrivals" cartoon, and the letters in issue 760 protesting that these are in bad taste in times of war.

The issue is dated Friday 18th, but I'm sure I saw it in the shops on Wednesday 16th. Therefore it must have been printed before the war started, and the captions must presumably be taken as warnings about what would happen if there was a war...

Probably you'd have printed them anyway, but unless I've got the dates wrong, the objectors are taking your "jokes" in the wrong vein.

Yours pedantically,
CHARLES GOODWIN,

Barnet, Herts.

Sir,

I was appalled to see in the Colour Section of your Invasion Special, a cartoon of extremely poor taste depicting undertakers at Heathrow Airport.

As someone with many close friends and colleagues serving in the Gulf, I looked at the picture with complete disbelief. Do I detect some similarity between the mentality of the artist and that of Saddam Hussein? I think we should be told!

Yours faithfully,
G.J. BRUCE,

Lincoln.

Sir,

For a magazine which manages to fill its pages with mock-indignation at all the immorality of other publications, Newman's cartoon in issue 759 provided confirmation of its own hypocrisy. I am not one of life's complainers but the cartoon touched on a matter of life and death and the bereavement that is likely to strike many families in coming months — and that, I assure you, is no laughing matter. Basic moral law dictates that you should apologise immediately. The question is — do you have the guts to do so?

Yours faithfully,
OLIVER S. CONOLLY,

Paris.

Sir,

I thought your "Undertaker" cartoon was brilliant and I hope you will ignore the complaints of bad taste. War is not tasteful. It kills people.

I suspect it will be years before we know the true total of those killed or otherwise smashed up in this wicked and unnecessary war. Meanwhile, the Eye's black humour is a welcome relief from the sanctimonious/bloodthirsty tone of other papers.

Yours faithfully,
M. WILLIAMS,

Wootton, Beds.

NF-off

Sir,

Your recent cartoon showing undertakers waiting at an airport displaying placards with soldiers names on them must rate as one of the sickest things I have ever seen.

Yours faithfully,
KELVIN SANDERSON,

National Front Ex-Servicemen's Association, London N17.

O.B.N.

NORMA MAJOR drew gasps of admiration yesterday when she turned up on Prime Minister husband John's arm in a glamorous, full-length evening gown for a night on the town.

Norma, who usually shuns the limelight, showed she is no slouch in the fashion stakes at the Conservative party's winter ball at London's Grosvenor House hotel.

The stunning outfit, neatly tucked in at the waist and with trendy long sleeves and a plunging neckline, was a tailor-made answer to claims she has few glamorous clothes in her wardrobe.

When her husband John became Premier, she was quickly dubbed shy, with no desire to stray from the family home. But last night fashion experts were saying Norma might just be making a transformation — to Leading Lady and fashion queen.

Daily Express

But never mind the quibbles, what is Tina [Brown] like? "The best editor I ever worked for," one person tells me. "Smart, tough, funny, sexy, brilliant," says another. "Getting a job with Tina was like dying and waking up in hack heaven," says a third.

MARTYN HARRIS
Telegraph Weekend Magazine

Submitted by Ena B. Pitman, E. Strobes.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

From Russia with love

Sir,

Reference your article in issue 760 about the alleged arming of Iraq by the West.

Perhaps your scribe could tell us where in Britain, France or Italy the following Iraqi weaponry is manufactured—Scud missiles, Kalashnikov rifles, MiG fighters, T55 and T72 tanks, TNC 45 destroyers, Polnochny landing craft carriers...

I suppose its absolutely inconceivable that this arsenal could have been supplied by our pals the Soviets?

Yours faithfully,
IAN HINGLE,

London W13.

Friction list

Sir,

I'm a little surprised to see you refer to Headline Books as "a decidedly downmarket publishing house" since I have a couple of their books before me for review: a technical discussion of the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, called First Contact, and a feminist novel called Hermetech. Both are serious works in their differing ways, and though Folio Club editions they ain't, both are attractively designed, decently printed and bound and meticulously proofed. What is downmarket about that? Do you perhaps mean that Headline has provided you with no "Literary Review" stories about huge advances being paid for tat?

Yours faithfully,
C.N. GILMORE,

Bedford.

Best motives

Sir,

Thank you so much for the publicity about Prisoners Abroad (Grovel 18 Jan). May I hope that neither you nor your staff ever become our clients.

Although your organ is known for its modesty you might like to point out to your readers your generosity in donating six copies to us each fortnight. (We need more!) These are sent to our clients in fetid foreign gaols where they can be utilised as barter, for firelighting, stopping draughts in walls, etc and, when all else fails, for reading.

I know that the receipt of such publications by prisoners are a major factor in trying to keep up their morale when confronted by the most appalling conditions and sometimes torture. We are grateful.

The sad thing is that we are a small charity and the ONLY *organisation doing this work. Without Prisoners Abroad many of our clients would have no contact with the outside world or help. Often we have to provide medicines and food where insufficient are available.*

I hope that your readers may be inspired by your own legendary zeal for philanthropy and send us their donations for this humane and necessary work.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH BEST,

Director, Prisoners Abroad, London EC1.

Taking the Mikhail

Sir,

Saddam's "Nobel Peace Prize" Cover

Forgive me for being thick but I thought the Saddam Hussein Peace Prize cover was the most splendid dig at Mr Gorbachev's "peace" initiatives I have seen in ages. Obviously I have completely missed the point of the joke because I'm not foaming at the mouth and writing in to cancel my subscription, etc, etc.

Yours faithfully,
REID THOMAS,

Dorking, Surrey.

Relief message

Sir,

I am writing to correct a report in your issue of 31 January. It is not true that the Israeli government has refused to allow Oxfam to ship in supplies of the nerve gas antidote Atropine. The Atropine supplied by Oxfam has been shipped to Israel and is presently being distributed to health workers, hospitals and medical centres in the Occupied Territories by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The antidote, part of a £34,000 grant for first aid supplies, was sent in response to an international appeal by the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, whose humanitarian work Oxfam has assisted for many years.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MAGRATH,

Oxfam, Oxford.

NF News

Sir,

Grovel published an eight-year-old picture of Garry Bushell in your 1 February edition apparently restraining a naked man. It was hardly new.

What you failed to mention is that a variation on this picture has been seen by at least 50,000 British rock fans as it has been printed in every one of the five reprints of the Iron Maiden biography "Running Free", written by that man the Eye loves to hate, Garry Bushell.

The naked man was wrongly identified as a member of Iron Maiden. In fact he is Ross Halfin, aka Gross Halfwit, the notorious rock photographer and son of the late songwriter Bob Halfin of "I'm A Pink Toothbrush" fame. Finally, I understand Mr Bushell spells his first name with two Rs, and not as Grovel had it: Gary.

Other than that, keep up the good work.

Yours faithfully,
STEVE BARTLETT,

Bromley, Kent.

Baste regularly...

Sir,

Please accept back the enclosed portion of your current issue. When I renewed my subscription last month I expected to receive amusing and satirical material. I should like to think that pictures such as this will not be appearing again. If they are, I would be grateful if you could inform me [SEE ACCOMPANYING PICTURE]*, so that I can terminate my subscription.*

Yours, an otherwise very satisfied reader,
D.R. ELLIOTT,

Preston, Lancs.

Scudamore attack

Sir,

Sorry to spoil a good story with the facts (Eye 1.2.91) but I would like to set the record straight over "That's Life!" and the Crookham Court sex abuse case.

True, the Newbury Weekly News carried their story about Mr Cadman's arrest in March 1989 but by then the case had already been closed by the police for lack of corroborative evidence. The boy concerned had approached Esther Rantzen in February, asking her to publicise the matter, so that other boys at the school would be protected.

After months of investigation, involving immense courage on the part of the seven boys who gave statements, "That's Life!" uncovered the corroborative evidence which enabled the police at last to bring Mr Cadman, Dr William Printer and Mr Anthony Edmonds to court.

Yours faithfully,
BRYHER SCUDAMORE,

Acting Editor, "That's Life!", BBC Television, London W12.

Cap'n Bob's got piles

Sir,

Re: Private Eye competition for the sighting of the greatest stockpiles of unsold copies of The European in the most far flung corners of the world.

In response to the competition announced in December, we would like to submit these photographs taken by a delegation from the chapel during their tour of eastern and central Europe last autumn.

The pictures show the interior of a Warsaw newsagent. Though unfortunately of very amateur quality, the prints clearly show that in order to reach over to some of the more desirable English language literature displayed on the shelf, the hapless customer has first to negotiate himself or herself past at least two waist-high stacks of unsold Europeans.

The dreadful picture that emerges is of a country struggling to free itself from the dark ages of communism, to breathe in new ideas and to rekindle the initiative and creativity of its people, now being ruthlessly smothered beneath a blanket of unsold Europeans. Truly the unacceptable face of the circulation war.

Yours,
Anna Wagstaff

Pergamon Press NUJ chapel, Oxford.

Forum play

Sir,

For what it is worth, Lord Young is NOT *speaking at the World Economic Forum on future interaction between the Government and British industry. This year. He did last year. WEF's next meeting in London will be around September.*

Regards,
PETER GIBBS,

London W5.

I-SPY

Western Infirmary, Glasgow

Submitted by Angela Sillars. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Ozzzzzz...one

Sir,

Past pronouncements had made me suspect "Old Muck" but with the latest unprovoked attack on those of us who are trying to protect the ozone layer, I have decided that he/she is definitely a bit of a loony.

It was, in fact, a British Antarctic survey in 1985 that proved beyond reasonable doubt that the hole in the ozone layer was being caused by chlorine in the upper atmosphere (as opposed to some "fantasies" put forward by the chemical companies). As I understand it, this is because the continuous cycle of ozone breaking down and reforming is interrupted by the presence of chlorine, most of which comes from CFCs.

Yours faithfully,
HARRY S. SUTCLIFFE,

Totnes, Devon.

Anti-sceptic

Sir,

Your number of former readers will grow rapidly if you continue to espouse "single issue" causes like anti-hunting.

In our experience the "antis" are intellectually immature idealists whipped along by the "class war" loonies to stop the supposedly idle rich from enjoying their pleasures, whereas most hunt followers and supporters around here tend to be working class or small business people and farmers.

Also the vast majority of hunt followers tend to be keen animal lovers who clearly understand the need to keep the fox and deer populations under control.

Yours faithfully,
FRED HESLOP,

Hants.

Plot thickener

Sir,

Colin Dexter certainly acknowledges the similarity in plot between The Daughter of Time and The Wench is Dead. My qualification for saying so is that I was his editor at the time and we discussed it when he delivered the typescript. I enclose a photostat of the blurb.

If this deserves "the usual fiver" can you put it in some appropriate fund like Bananaballs.

Yours faithfully,
HILARY HALE,

London SE15.

PS: If Colin says he's never read anything by David Lodge you can believe him: he's that sort of chap.

Four Eyes

Sir,

Penetrating journalism from "Square Eyes" suggesting the programme on Murphy's Law was the first of the new run on the "facetious" science series Q.E.D.

It was of course the fourth programme, preceded by hardly facetious reports on the scientific testing of homeopathy and eye surgery in Nicaragua, for instance.

So who is the ignorant "Square Eyes"? Could he perhaps be called Murphy? And are they by any chance related? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID FILKIN,

Series Editor, QED, BBC Television, London W14.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"The length of the war depends on how long it might be."
JONATHAN DIMBLEBY, BBC1
(Richard Glazier)

"Saddam Hussein may still have Scud missiles up his sleeve. That could be his last throw of the dice further down the road."
"Crossfire", Grampian TV
(Douglas Muir)

"Is there not a cosmetic carrot that could save this man's [Saddam Hussein's] bacon?"
MIKE MORRIS, TV-am
(L.B. Biddell)

"A small doubt, no bigger than a man's hand, must have crept into your mind."
TERRY WOGAN, BBC1
(S.J. Eason)

"It was a bit like a game of chess; they kicked the ball from one end to the other."
JOHN MONIE, BBC1
(Michael Dunford)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

THE SPIRIT OF HOMER WANTS TO WORK THROUGH ME..
.. SHALL I WRITE CLASSIC VERSE?
HE SEEMS TO WANT TO TRY HIS HAND AT PAINTING.
ACHILLES

Letter from **Canada**

from Our Own Correspondent

BEFORE 15 January, we Canadians spoke of nothing but our hatred of Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government and its new goods and services tax (GST). Since then, all talk has been of our unusually aggressive role in the Gulf.

One of the most dangerous things about war is its ability to unite a people behind a leader — even one who is a bungling buffoon. Having sat out the Vietnam war, Canadians are used to peering through the fence to watch the United States tear itself to pieces over its offshore adventures. This time Canada is again an ally, committing troops to active duty in a foreign conflict for the first time since Korea. Canadians under 40 are just getting used to the idea that there could be something out there besides peace and prosperity.

In fact the policies of the Mulroney administration have been eroding peace *and* prosperity at home for some time. Last summer Ottawa called out the armed forces to contain a gaggle of Mohawks at a golf course in suburban Montreal. At the end of the two-month stand-off a policeman was dead and Native land claims were again put on the back burner.

Our enviable standard of living has been compromised by six years of rule by Tories who tax like socialists and slash welfare programmes like hardline Thatcherites. This January's GST, a 7 percent levy applied at the retail level *on top of* provincial sales taxes of around 8 percent, is like VAT in Britain but its effect on the Canadian populace has been more reminiscent of your poll tax revolt.

We are not marchers or looters by nature, but the tax is universally despised and appears to be the final stake in the body politic of an incredibly unpopular prime minister. A recent poll indicates that Mulroney has the confidence of only 14 percent of the populace, the lowest of any elected head-of-state on the planet.

Contributing to this credibility gap have been Mulroney's misguided efforts to lure separatist-minded French-speaking Quebec back into the federal fold. He wanted to end the ludicrous situation in which, after 122 years one province has still not signed the constitution. He didn't manage it but he may have succeeded in fracturing our fragile nationhood once and for all.

The (Quebec-born) Mulroney's ruse was called the Meech Lake Accord: it would have granted Quebec unprecedented privileges through its "special status" as a "distant society". This was decried as unforgivably elitist and insultingly undemocratic by the rest of the country. Yet because of the Conservatives' majority, Meech appeared to be a *fait accompli* before it was scuppered by an unlikely hero: one Elijah Harper, a Cree from Manitoba and parliament's sole Native member. He refused his assent by politely but persistently asking how Quebec could possibly be recognised as a distinct society if Indian reserves were not? The accord died and, according to *Frank* magazine, an Ottawa-based variation of the *Eye*, the PM checked into a maximum-security detox clinic for the summer.

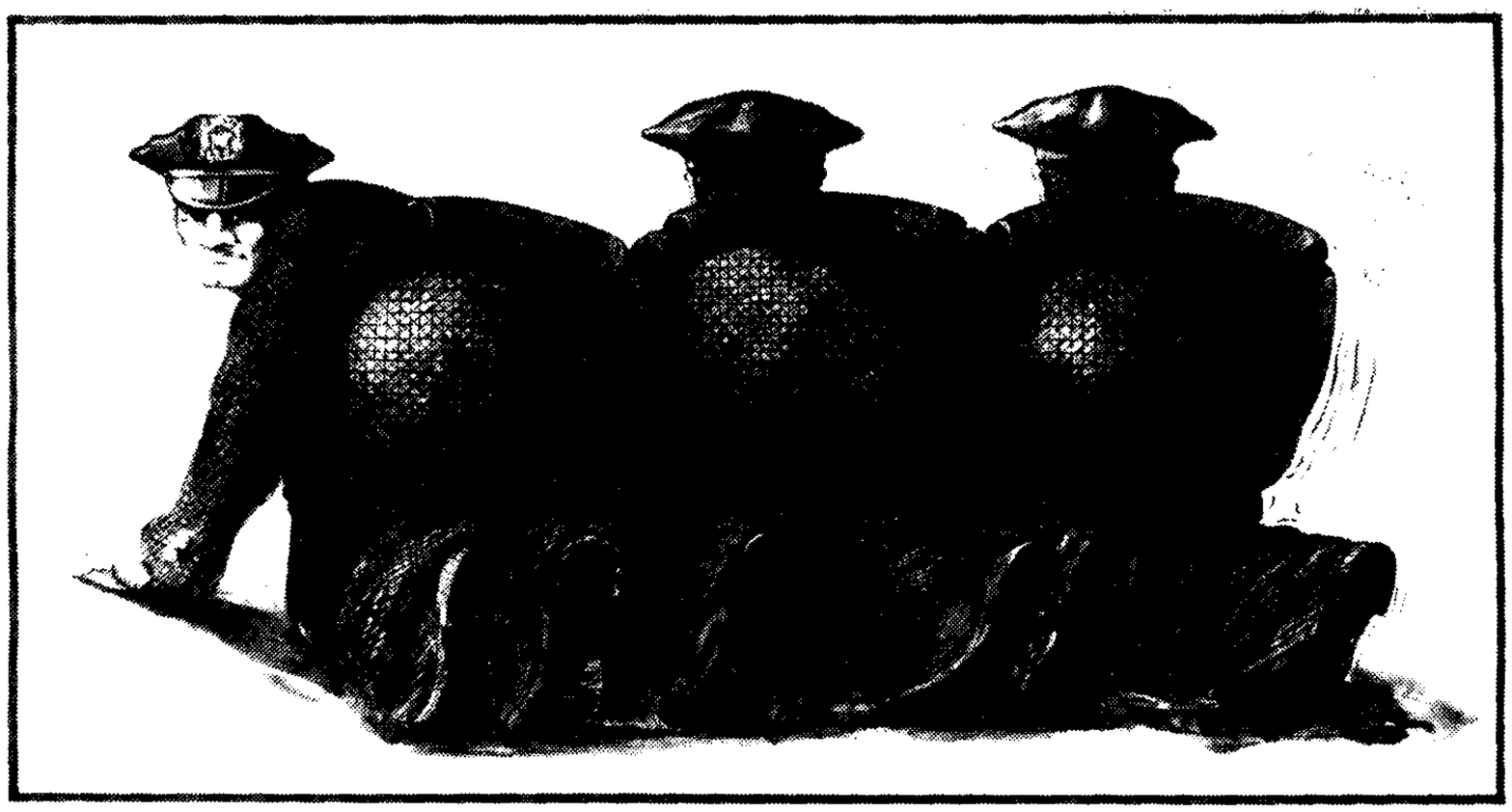
Despite the failure of Mulroney's shameless chicanery, Quebec's insatiable lust for autonomy is again on the front-burner. Independence sentiment in Quebec has never run higher — not even in the late '70s when the province elected the franco-fascist Parti Quebecois on a mandate for a (barely defeated) referendum on separation. A formal bill of divorcement and the break-up of the country now appears not only likely, but inevitable.

And so, a decade after Pierre Trudeau gained the Queen's permission to bring the British North America Act home from Buckingham Palace, Canada still has neither a ratified constitution, nor even any basis on which to begin negotiating again. Not to worry: with Brian Mulroney at the helm, we won't need one much longer anyway.

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN



CONGRATULATING his helpers during the first moments of his "Seasonal Debriefing", Mr T.H. Juggler, secretary of the Hoedean Entertainment Committee, emphasised that "the area needs some bright ideas for Easter".

"As you know," he continued, "the firework-radio link intended to trigger the shopowners' Christmas illuminations failed because Miss Thomas's sparklers would not catch. This resulted in a long delay of the rocket launch in St Michael's playing-fields. Therefore the bellringers of St Andrew's fell back on the weather for their signal. Unfortunately the wind was in the wrong direction and their tolling did not reach Mr Bob Gippy of the Chamber of Commerce — and so the lights were never switched on.

"The Mummers and the Street Theatre Group got off to a fair start but when they saw that the lights had not been illuminated and most parents had taken their children home they gave their show to the customers of the Three Crowns."

IN HIS explanation, Chief Superintendent Pierre du Chêne of the Ardèche road patrol said: "We received reports of a gun battle taking place around the Cistercian monastery of Our Lady of the Snows. When we got out of our wagons we saw some twenty monks armed with hunting rifles and crossbows engaged in battle with about the same number of burglars who had broken into, and then burst out of, the monks' brandy, wine and relics store.

"However, by the time we actually got into the fighting area, the burglars had made off in their cars and because of their vow of silence the monks could not identify any of the assailants."

ALTHOUGH the case of the nude dancer Jenny Davis (18) has been deferred to a district court, the retrial may be blocked as the arresting officers, Sergeant James Sport and Officers Potash and Camp, have refused to repeat the "visual evidence" they gave at the earlier hearing.

"After describing how Miss Davis and her troupe began their act," said Mr Garrison Mortan, for the New York State police, "and in answer to the question 'How did they drive the audience into a frenzy?', the officers got down on their hands and knees and thrust their bottoms back and forth at the jury.

"This caused so much laughter among all present, and so much embarrassment to the witnesses, that they have refused to repeat it and the defence is asking for dismissal."

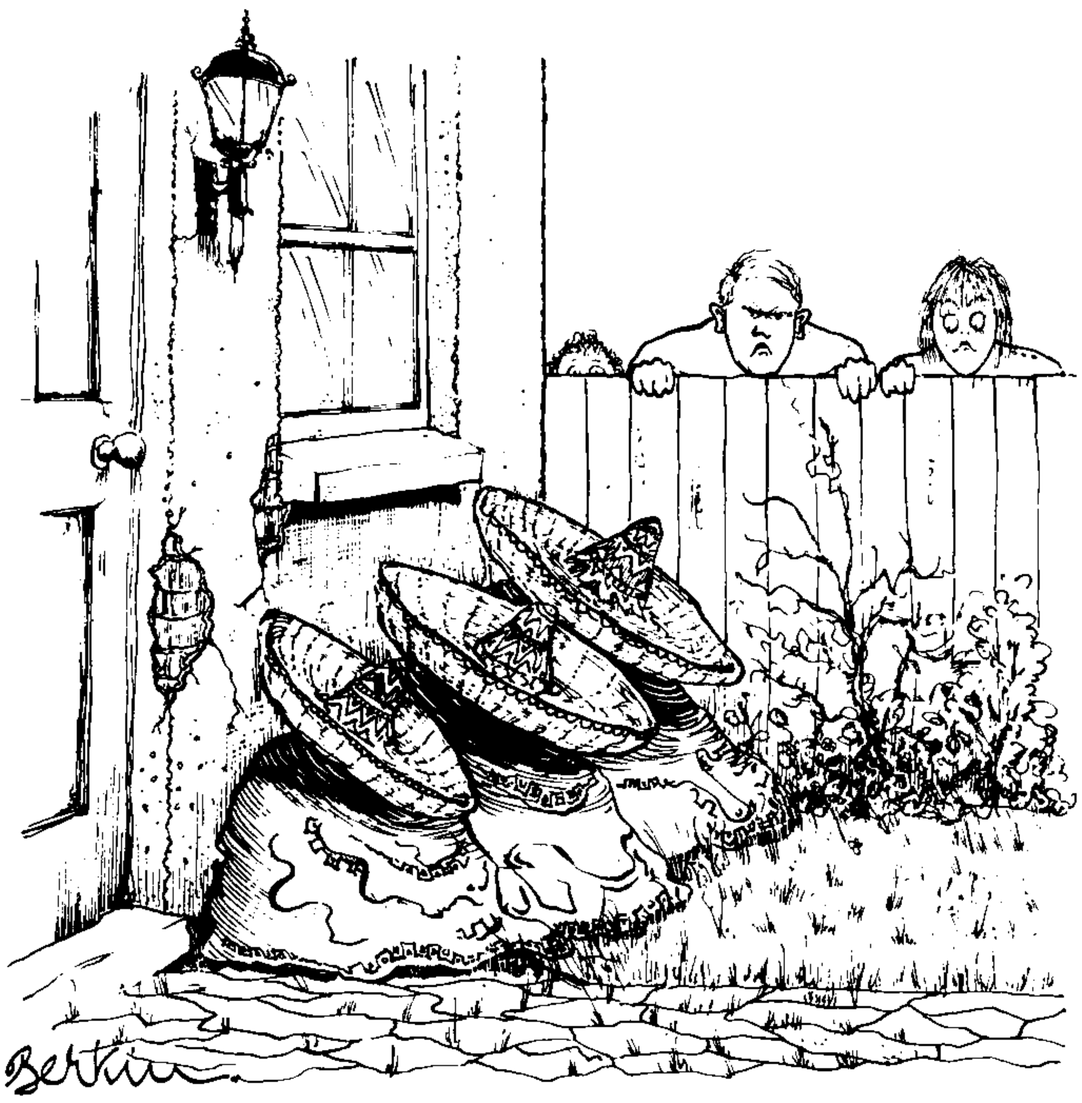
DURING her interview, Mrs Anna Logan, who works in the off-licence of Corrie, Arran, and has been campaigning for several years for better street lighting in the village, admitted that she had been knocked off her own, fully lamped, cycle in the darkest part of the road by another, completely unlamped, cyclist who was under the influence of the drink she had sold to him earlier that afternoon.

MR JUAN Pero Quinoñera, a farmer of Carril near Pontevedra, is suing his brother, Mr Paco Quinoñera, and the local police over the death of his prize pig, Donna Mallorca.

"Donna made her way into my brother's stable. In this stable a huge quantity of marijuana leaves were drying. Donna ate several pounds of these leaves, after which she became incredibly active, ran down the lane onto the road and began to dance, before she was knocked down by a lorry. The police should have found the leaves and my brother should not have had them."

INFORMATION: Norfolk News 16.11.90; Tablet 17.11.90; National Law Journal 3.12.90; Arran Banner 8.12.90; ABC 12.12.90.

MONITORS: Jane Pearce, Anon, Daniel Cowles, Trevor Petch, "Rolleston".



"I don't think the Wilkins are really facing up to their debt problem very well"

Yes, it's Viscount Althorp Rhyming Slang!

Sally Ann Lasson	**Night of passion**
Di's brother	**Bit of the other**
Society Beauty	**Not very fruity**
Kiss 'n' tell	**Paris hotel**
Dinner at Claridges	**Not good for marriages**
Bit of wallop	*Tatler* **trollop**
Rumpy-Pumpy	**Now she's grumpy**
Five grand	**One night stand**
Romantic sex	**Large cheques**
News of the World	**Toes curled**
Victoria Lockwood	**Dump him, she should**
Charlie	**Charlie**

(That's enough slang, Ed.)

Denmarg
Eventide Estate
Dulwich

Dear Bill,

Forgive the long silence, but as you can imagine life has not exactly been a bowl of cocktail cherries. You ask about Hoppo's Eightieth. Ever since the balloon went up, our American Cousins have been trembling in terror at the thought of using public transport as far as the corner store, so one happy result is that we had the Concorde to ourselves going over, except for that TV man with the bags under his eyes who does the breakfast show. (The stewardess told me he practically lives on board and keeps his own toothbrush and shaving mug in one of the overhead lockers.) Maurice's travel agent also managed in the circs to get us a very good deal whereby they gave us a champagne dinner if we accepted a free ticket.

With my mind on a possible Retirement Home for Margaret, I was naturally keen to see how well Hoppo had done for himself in this line, and I must say Rancho Magnifico at Santa Harmonica is very salubrious. If you picture Dozy Willis's hacienda in Majorca, where we stayed the time Maurice dived into the empty swimming pool, multiplied by six that will give you a dim idea of the sheer glory of it. We got picked up at the helipad by the Old Cowboy himself, driving his electrified golf buggy, and driven out to our personalised bungalow on the estate – one of ninety – complete with its own miniature golf course, swimming pool, massage parlour and drive-in cinema. On the way over there the old boy, who appears at first sight to be quite sane, held forth about the need for what he called a Positive Attitude to the Golden Harvest Years.

I hoped the Boss might be lending an ear to this, but she gazed out of the window, only occasionally delving in her bag for a handful of pills which she crunched grimly as the former President expanded on this theme. "My good friend Dr Billy Graham has put it very beautifully in his little work 'Get Rich With Jesus Today', a copy of which you will find by your bed in the ranch house. 'There is no more beautiful sight in God's World than a wise old man, his tasks accomplished, his face marked with the lines of kindliness and experience, his head powdered with silver, asleep in his chair after a good lunch'."

Such figures inevitably tended to predominate at the Big Eight-Oh Barbecue that evening at the Hail To The Chief Ranch House. I think the youngest person present was that crooner with a wig in the Mafia, who was persuaded to sing later on. I drew the short straw at dinner and got a poolside seat next to the Emaciated Spouse, our only other neighbours at table being a very old comic, also in a wig, called George Burns, and Madame Blavatsky, a clairvoyant who told me she'd had an office in the White House and used to advise the President on propitious days to get out of bed. Burns, who smoked a cigar all through the turf 'n' surf chowder that followed, eventually said: "If I was in bed with you I'd get out of it pretty damn quick."

Margaret sat through the whole grisly business with a vacant expression on her face, even when her neighbour, Bob Hope, who must be ninety if he is a day, rinsed his false teeth in the champagne and did an impersonation of a very elderly chimpanzee. Hope really put his foot in it when the heavy drinking got under way, when he asked the guests to raise their glasses of Passion Fruit Low Calorie Knockout to our honoured guest, the Prime Minister of Great Britain – "long may she reign". At this Margaret produced a handkerchief and blubbed for the rest of the evening.

As you will gather from the foregoing, the transition from workaholic to alcoholic has not been an easy one. Do you remember when Humper Willoughby was suddenly persuaded to take early retirement by Glaxo? One minute he was a ball of energy, burning the candle at both ends – breakfast meetings after his jog, on the go, like the famous egg, from arsehole to breakfast table. Then, wham! One morning he wakes up, filofax blank until the Day of Judgement. Next time we saw him he was pushing a zimmer frame round the East India and Sports looking like Maurice after one of his electric shock treatments.

I won't say the Boss has quite reached that stage yet, but life in the flat in Belgravia – very commodious, porter on the door, couple of sheiks upstairs (all very quiet) – is proving very edgy. She still gets up at four in the morning, bangs about a lot with suitcases, waiting for Farming Today to come on, and by the time I get down for breakfast she's usually pretty livid. "You'll be off to the House of Commons, I imagine," I tried saying yesterday. "You don't want to miss the big debate on the Gulf." Instant Krakatoa. She was not going to set foot in the place. Those ungrateful swine. The humiliation of sitting next to Heath. "Come on, old girl," I tried. "You always liked it there in the old days." After that she used several very explicit words and I have no idea where she picked them up. The gist of it was that it was all my fault for being such a useless husband, always drunk, only interested in my business friends. A real husband would have kept her informed of the vile conspiracies going on behind her back, would have counselled and advised. Then she started blubbing again and took some more of her new pills.

If she goes on like this I'm toying with the idea of asking Maurice round. After all he has a history of mental instability in the family and might be able to suggest some wheeze.

Yours amid the encircling gloom,

Denis

ALLIED TROOPS SUCCESSFUL IN SURPRISE ATTACK

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson of the Crimea News Pool

[This despatch has been compiled under reporting restrictions]

Units of the British Light Brigade today directed a major assault on Russian artillery positions.

Unconfirmed reports have been received that our troops advanced at least "half a league", despite encountering severe fire from the enemy ordnance on both right and left flanks.

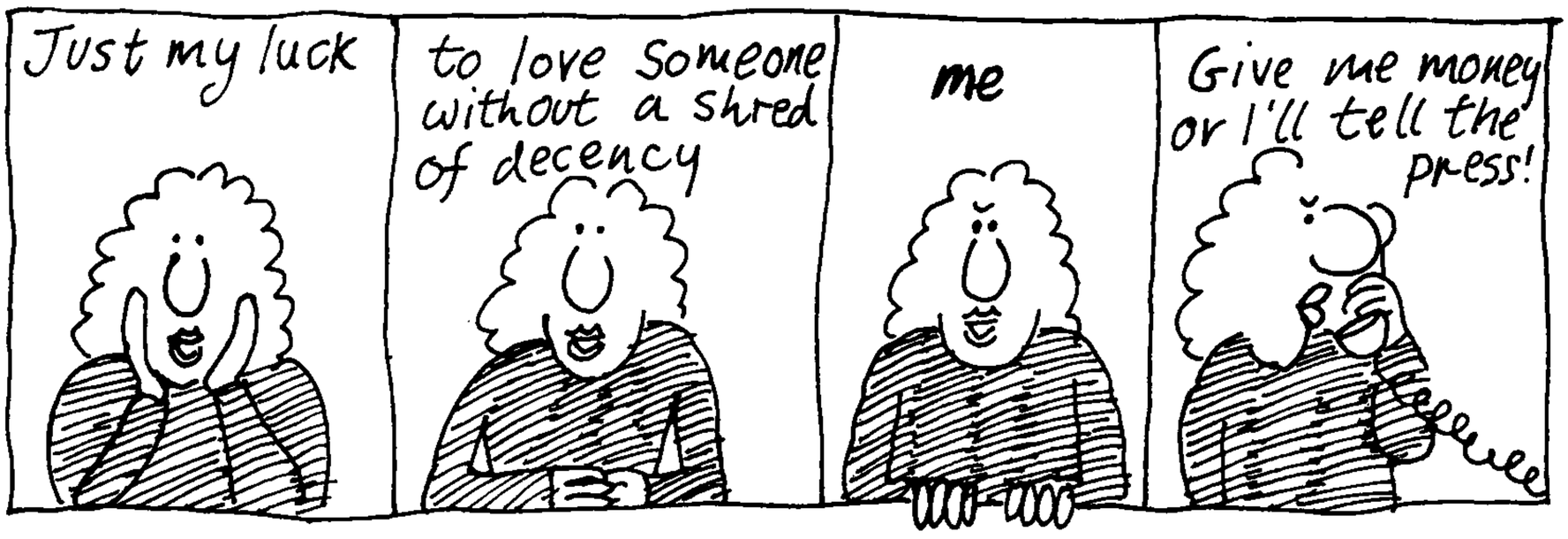
The valley into which a large number of coalition troops charged cannot be named, but it is believed to be somewhere near Sebastapol.

Despite sustaining "minor casualties", the Brigade secured all its objectives, said a spokesman at a press briefing in Constantinople.

Asked whether the British brigade had made "a number of tactical errors", the spokesman said: "It was not theirs to reason why. They were there to do a job. The Crimean War is running exactly according to schedule."

Lord Raglan is 153.

That old Chequebook... by Silly Ann Leaver



Deirdre Spart, Co-Chairperson of the Islington Poll Tax Refuseniks Committee Against The Gulf War, comments on a vital issue of the day.

In a typical and totally misogynist... er... the patriarchal male gung-ho fascist war-mongering establishment has challenged the right of women to take an equal place in the front line alongside men which is totally disgusting in an age of supposed equal opportunity which is just a totally and sickeningly cynical lie to cover up the total suppression of women from their rightful place i.e. on the battlefield with equal status and totally shared non-sexist responsibilities vis-à-vis all aspects of the situation in the Gulf which is by the way totally the fault of men with their murderous testosterone impulses and their genocidal male maleness... er... the phallic symbolism of the masculine military complex i.e. guns missiles etc is totally woman-alien and gyno-oppressive and therefore *(continued page 94)*

TELEVISION

Day Four: Operation White Storm

(Extended broadcast: all channels)

DIMBLEBY: I'll have to stop you there because we're getting news from Basingstoke of fresh drifts blocking the B52. What d'you make of that, General?

GENERAL GUSSETT: Well, that is exactly what we expected. Snow has a tendency to come down and lie on the ground. And then if there is a wind you get drifts which are very hard to take out no matter how many troops you bring in.

REDHEAD: I'll have to interrupt you there because we have unconfirmed reports of a train near Swindon apparently on the move. So we're going live to a British Rail briefing.

(Man standing by placard reading NO TRAINS *in Brunel Lounge at Swindon station)*

BR MAN: For operational reasons I cannot give out any details of train movements at this moment in time. Such details might provide valuable information to the commuter.

(Cut back to film of snowplough. Caption reads LIBRARY FOOTAGE*)*

FRANCES TUSA: We're looking at a British snowplough here, built by Hargreaves and Chillfactor in their Birmingham factory in 1941. It's primitive but effective. It's only problem is that if there *is* snow it immediately breaks down.

(Cut to Paxman and Iraqi Ambassador)

TARIQ AZIZ: It is your punishment. The hand of God has struck the commuters of Satan. You will all freeze to death.

PAXMAN: You shifty towel-headed bastard.

(Cut to Esther Rantzen)

ENID: We've had more reports of toddlers being hit by snowball attacks. If you feel that your child is a victim of SNOWABUSE ring our...

(Continued on all channels)

(Continued from Page One) Manhattan town-house. The sassy blonde who married Dame Edith Evans was responsible for transforming the *Tatler* from a dull low-circulation glossy about the aristocracy into a dull low-circulation glossy about the aristocracy. With her blue eyes and immaculate 5th Avenue dress sense she belies her 58 years. Sharp, funny, witty, bright, immaculately dressed, blonde, funny, witty, blonde, sharp, she talks about her enthusiasm for the big new launch.

"We've got an amazing 20,000 word profile by Gail Whoshe on Suds Verbelstein, the notorious Bronx property racketeer and art collector. Then there's a none-too-reverent look at how amazingly brilliant Kevin Costner is in his amazingly brilliant new western, *Dancing with Gerbils*. And to top it all there's a collection of hitherto unpublished photos of Martin Amis in the bath by Frannie Helmutwicz."

It's all a far cry from the dreamy spires of Oxford when... Auberon Waugh... Soho... *Sunday Times*... *Tatler*... irreverent... Julian Barnes... Melvyn Bragg... Condé Nast... Sly Newhouse... *Vogue*... Anna Wintour... Diana Vreeland... Donald Trump... really dull people in America...

"I love your England," she says, "rain, crumpets, Dick van Dyke, your policemen, your Stratford-on-Avon. I love it so much I never come here. Now get out. I've got another 38 interviews to do."

© *All newspapers, by a lot of hacks looking for work.*

To the Editor of the Daily Telegraph

The Snow and Media Coverage of the War

SIR—Why is it that, when we can direct a laser-bomb through the keyhole of a post office in Baghdad, we appear to be quite incapable of keeping trains running from Paddington to Castle Cary after a mere seven feet of snow?

I remain, Sir, still in Paddington,

SIR HERBERT GUSSETT
The Old Tie Rack
Platform 3, Paddington.

SIR—Those of us who remember the dark days of World War Two have been appalled by the behaviour of the so-called media while this country has in recent days been fighting for its life. Even while the bombers are flying out on their hazardous missions, the likes of Jeremy Paxman are sitting there in the warmth and comfort of a television studio, sniggering and smirking and wearing a flowery tie. If Mr Paxman and his ilk had been with us in 1940, would we have defeated Herr Hitler?

Yours faithfully,
WING COMMANDER
HUBERT GUSSETT,
The Old Hangar,
Windsock, Beds.

SIR—Do we really need to be told that there is a war on? How can this possibly help our gallant troops in the Gulf? Have they not heard of security? Some of us were unaware that World War One had ended until the outbreak of World War Two. I think that was for the best.

Yours faithfully,
RIP VAN
GUSSETTWINKLE,
The Old Phone Kiosk,
Gavin St Amp,
Glasgow.

HOLY LOCH!! MARCH NOW TO SAVE BRITAIN'S INDEPENDENT DETERRENT

The conscience of the world has been shocked by the cynical decision of the US warmongers to callously and unilaterally close down the nuclear facility at Holy Loch, which means that literally millions of Scotland's workers will be on the dole and unable to afford the poll tax, which they are anyway refusing to pay.

The British Left is totally united in condemning anything the Americans do and in particular the withdrawing of their deadly nuclear weapons from Scottish bases, where they have been since time immemorial.

SPEAKERS:

Pol Fot, Tony Benn, Tariq McAli, Glenys Kinnock, Emma Thompson, Clare Short and several men with beards.

Messages of support have been invited from President Gorbachev, Robert Maxwell and Harold Pinter.

SAVE THE BOMB AND VOTE LABOUR

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

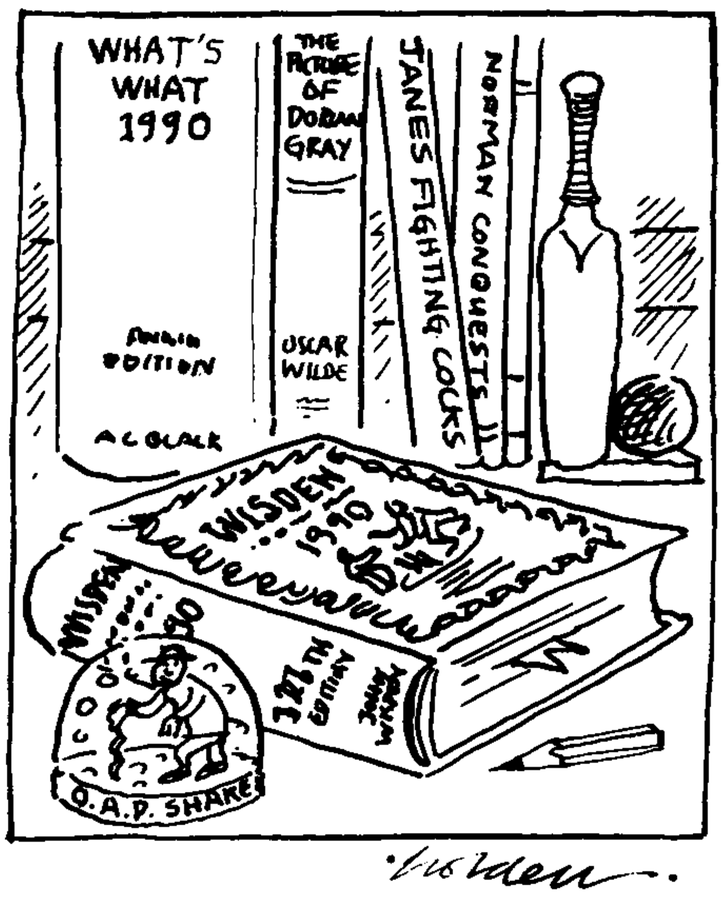
Sunday

When I got up this morning, I thought "What a beautiful day. Grey and cold." After breakfast we had a meeting of the War Cabinet. I can now remember all their names — my friend Chris, Douglas, of course, Norma Lamont, Mr King, and the man who sits at the end of the table who is some kind of lawyer.

Douglas began by saying that he wanted to tell us about his Peace Plan. I said: "Don't be silly, Douglas. Don't you know the war's still on." He went a bit red. Norma broke the silence by asking whether we'd heard the story about the three Iraqi soldiers and the Irish nurse. I said: "No, I don't think it was in the *Independent* this morning." They all laughed.

Monday

There was some really exciting news on the radio this morning. Apparently in South Africa, which I checked on my map is right down at the bottom of Africa, Mr de Klerk has abolished apartheid. This is really good news as it means that England can now play cricket in South Africa again.



The last time we played against South Africa, as all *Wisden*-lovers like myself know, was in 1968 when Pieter van der Kaffirbasher scored 157 not out in a third-wicket stand with Kepler van der Krugerrand, which was a record for a touring side at the Oval. I mentioned this to everyone at the meeting, and then casually asked if anyone knew what "apartheid" meant. Mr Waldegrave said it didn't matter now that it was all over, but just to remember that there was no longer any difference between black and white. My friend Chris chipped in: "You'll like it John, it means everyone will be grey." Our meetings are very informal — oh yes — and have been so for quite some considerable period of time.

Tuesday

Snow! Who'd have thought it. I thought it was a good job I didn't have to go out to work, or I might never get there! Norman asked me whether I would like hot milk on my weetabix. "Oh yes," I said. That shows how cold it is.

After breakfast there was a knock at the door. It was a man from Whitehall who asked whether I could explain the regulations for helping old people with their heating bills that I introduced in 1987. Those were the days when Mrs Thatcher was Prime Minister, and I had real power!

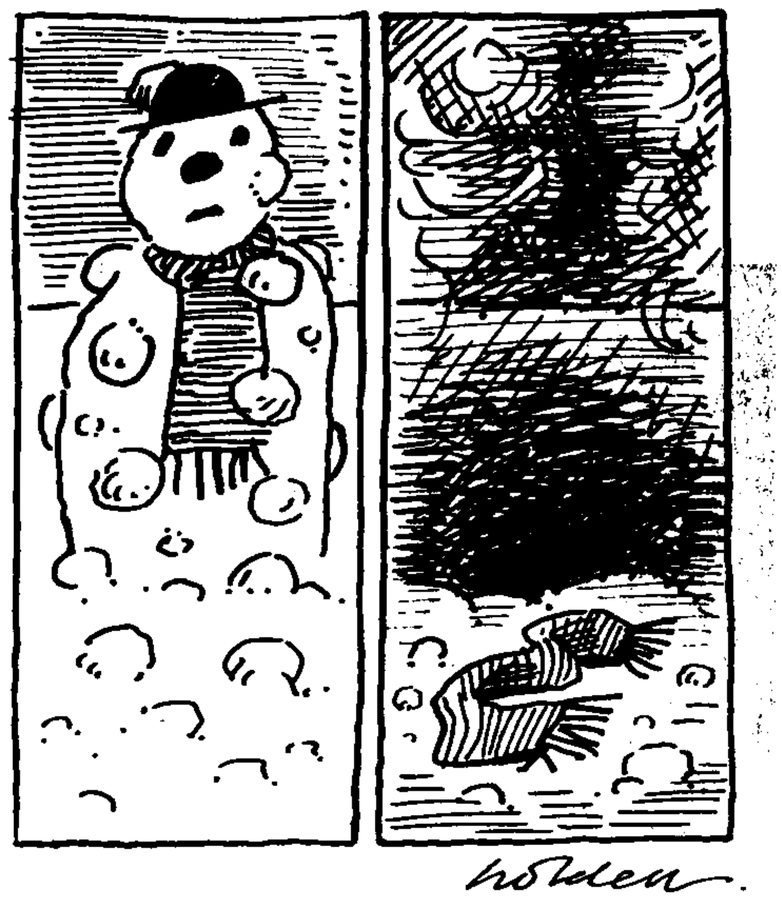
I said that it was very simple and I got out my calculator to explain. I also got out the thermometer Norman and I bought in Torremolinos in 1983. It is a model of a bullfighter holding a cape, only his sword is actually a thermometer. "Look," I said. "First you have to wait till the temperature has gone down to minus 13°, or just past the bull's horns. When it has done that five days running, or seven days if there are only two in between when it hasn't been above minus 11°, then any bona fide pensioner living on Social Security can fill in a simple four-page application with their birth certificate, and if the local benefit office adjudicates in their favour a sum of £3.75 will be sent to them or their surviving relatives."

When I had finished, I noticed that the man from Whitehall had fallen asleep. Perhaps, I thought, they are having to work too hard. It is not at all like that programme, *Oh Yes, Prime Minister*.

Wednesday

Sir Charles Powell, our Foreign Affairs adviser, came in to see me after the War Cabinet meeting and said that he was just going round to talk to Mrs Thatcher to tell her everything that had happened. As you can imagine, I got pretty cross about this. "You silly twit," I said to him. "You've got it completely wrong. You go to see Mrs Thatcher *before* our meetings, and then come back and brief me so that we know what to do."

When I told my friend Chris about this, I said: "Honestly, you wonder how some people get the job." "You



certainly do," he replied, giving me one of his funny looks!

Thursday

We were all sitting around in the War Cabinet this morning, wondering when they were going to start the ground war (obviously we won't be told for security reasons), when suddenly there was a huge bang outside in the garden.

We looked out of the window, and there was a cloud of smoke going up from where my snowman used to be. All that was left was his grey scarf.

The silence was broken by Norma Lamont. "That's the best bang I've had for weeks," he said. Everybody laughed, but I wasn't quite sure why. I said to them all: "Don't worry, I expect it's only one of those Scud missiles." Then I looked at my map on the wall and I was very surprised to see that in fact we are much too far away from Iraq for one of their rockets to land on my garden. "Thank goodness for that," I said. "It's only the IRA."

Friday

Stopped at a Happy Eater on my way to Scarborough where I have to speak to young people.

We have a very remarkable meal and I have kept the menu as a souvenir. This is what I had:

The Doncaster Slipway Happy Classless Sizzler
(one choice only due to adverse weather conditions)

Eggs, Sausage, Tomato, Bacon, Mushrooms *plus* HP Sauce

— ❋ —

Earl Grey Tea (my favourite)

— ❋ —

Toast, Marmalade

Sad to say, the service was a little slow and could do with improving. This gave me an idea for my speech: "Better services for all." It went down very well, oh yes — unlike my breakfast.

SUN FILTH EXCLUSIVE

Spiggy has shock swelling in groin

by Sun Medical Staff
DR A. QUACK

MR SPIGGY TOPES, the lead singer of the now-legendary Turds, a popular singing group, was yesterday reported to have discovered a mysterious swelling in the region of the groin.

According to sources close to Mr Topes, 57, he had woken his wife, ex-model Miss Jerry Tall, complaining of a mystery lump. He immediately rang the newspapers and then contacted his doctor.

After a lengthy consultation with his Harley Street specialist, it was discovered that the "lump" was in fact nothing more serious than a cucumber which Mr Topes had placed in his trousers during a performance with the Turds at the Neasden Arena last week.

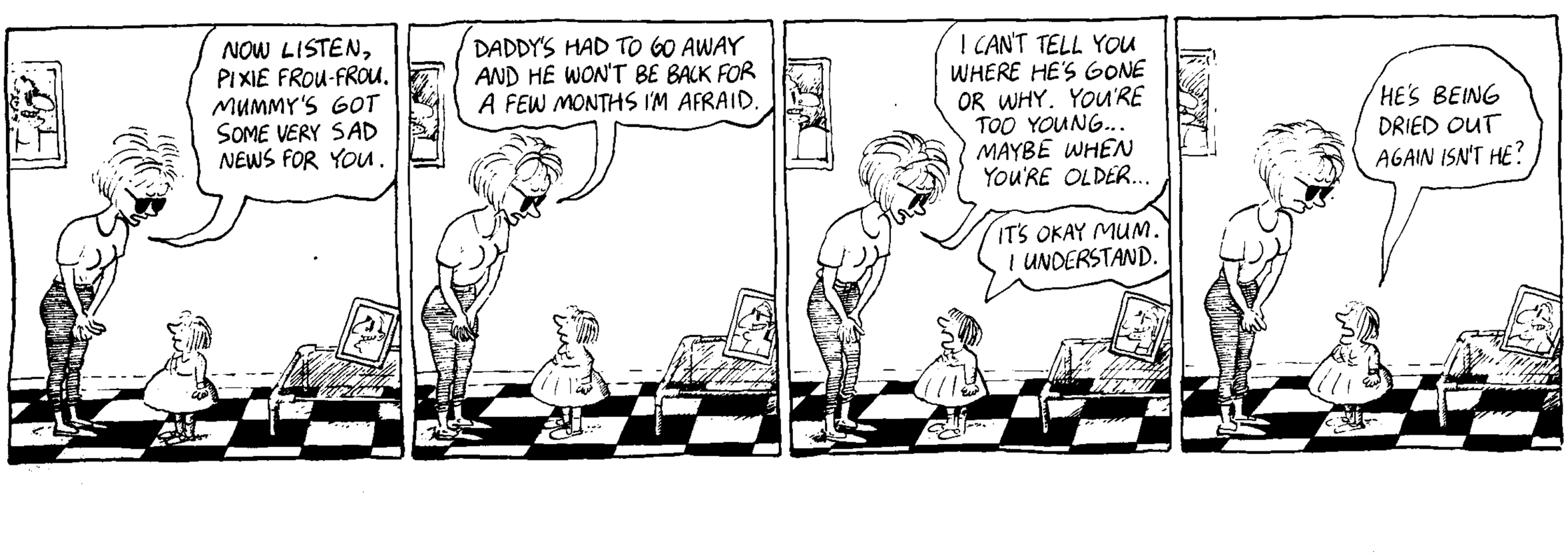
A clearly relieved Mr Topes told a hastily convened press conference: "I have stared the Big C full in the face — and then we made a salad out of it."

Bill Wyman is 98.

Great Bores Of Today.

"...no we had no problem whatsoever we got tickets on the day we could have had any seat in the house and I'd never seen *Aspects* or *Phantom* and we had a wonderful meal at the Caprice afterwards didn't have to book just walked in and there were cabs everywhere one of them stopped for us and we were back at the hotel in five minutes and the discount there is amazing three-day break with free champagne for less than it costs to be at home we had a suite and we went to the Man Ray at the Barbican and Stanley Spencer isn't he wonderful? all those people coming out of their graves there's no one on the streets and the parks are beautiful they're so empty we had a wonderful time isn't the recession terrible? ..."

Celeb


NOW LISTEN, PIXIE FROU-FROU. MUMMY'S GOT SOME VERY SAD NEWS FOR YOU.
DADDY'S HAD TO GO AWAY AND HE WON'T BE BACK FOR A FEW MONTHS I'M AFRAID.
I CAN'T TELL YOU WHERE HE'S GONE OR WHY. YOU'RE TOO YOUNG... MAYBE WHEN YOU'RE OLDER...
IT'S OKAY MUM. I UNDERSTAND.
HE'S BEING DRIED OUT AGAIN ISN'T HE?

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: The Duke of Edinburgh has called a meeting of the senior male members of the Royal Family to discuss an important matter.

Now read on...

"SIT DOWN, all of you, and pay attention!" The Duke of Edinburgh, wearing the full dress uniform of a Chief Inspector of the Lesotho police force, banged his sjambok firmly on the mahogany table, rattling the silver-framed photographs of his favourite dogs.

Charles shifted nervously in his chair. He had been hastily summoned and the Duke's blunt but uninformative fax — "Get here now, boy" — had forced him to cancel a session with his new organic ortho-lumbar therapist, Miss Tracy Krishna of the Potters Bar ashram.

The Duke picked up an embossed sheet of paper bearing the legend FROM THE DESK OF THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH and read out the minutes.

"Right. Apologies for absence. Andrew, Prince. On active service rather than nancying about backstage with a load of theatrical shirtlifters."

The Duke looked at Prince Edward, the only other member of the family present.

Charles asked nervously: "Er... what exactly are we here for, Sir?"

The Duke produced from his tunic a rumpled copy of the *News of the World* with the headline MY ROYAL ONE-NIGHT STAND OF SHAME BY DI'S NAUGHTY BROTHER.

Despite the undoubted appallingness of his brother-in-law's conduct, Charles could not help feeling a sense of deep relief that it was not he who had transgressed against the family code. So often in the past it had been he, Charles, trembling on the other side of the oak door, waiting for the Duke to bark "Enter!". He allowed himself a faint smile, glad it was Charlie Althorp this time who was to feel the lash of the Duke's tongue.

"Wipe that grin off your face," the Duke rasped. "He's *your* bloody brother-in-law. If you'd kept your eye on him instead of messing about on television and talking to weirdos, we wouldn't have this little mess on our doorstep."

Edward leaned forward, took off his red baseball cap, emblazoned with the words KICK BUTT on the peak, and spun it around his finger.

"If I can grab a little air-time, gang. I mean, let's face it, this sort of thing happens all the time, especially in my world. For instance, Andy has just broken up with Sarah."

Charles blinked.

"Really? I thought he was married to someone called Fergie. This really *is* appalling. Pater has a point, you know. The whole moral fabric sort of thing depends on us setting the tone as it were and..."

Edward interrupted, donning a pair of RayCooney sunglasses. "Wrong, Chazzo. My mate Lloyd-Webber was married to Sarah Bright..."

The Duke had had enough.

"Shut up, the pair of you, and stop drivelling."

Charles and Edward sat bolt upright at their father's command. His tone was frighteningly reminiscent of that afternoon some years ago when the Duke had threatened to shoot Charles's pet gerbil for making a nest in his polo helmet.

"If we're going to keep this show on the road, by which I mean your mother and the rest of the firm, as it were, then we've got to make young Althorp toe the bloody line."

"YOU'VE got to toe the bloody line, d'you hear!" Charlie Althorp stood impassively in front of the tribunal, his eyes looking glazedly at the Duke. Charles noticed that he had failed to shave. And wasn't that a bottle of champagne sticking out of the pocket of his green Lyn Barbour jacket?

With trembling fingers, Althorp opened a crumpled packet of Mountbatten's Number One Sailor Boy Extra-Strength and automatically lit up.

"You can put that out for a start! If there's any smoking to be done, I'll be the one to do it."

The Duke rose and walked round the table to stand face to face with the errant young aristocrat.

"Now listen here. I don't care where you put your tackle on shore leave, but just make damn sure you pick a gal who knows how to keep her mouth shut."

Charles hastily intervened.

"And there is the whole marriage aspect, you know, the sanctity of the fidelity thing. You may have read my friend Laurens van der Post's book *Marital Customs in the Kama Sutras...*"

Althorp sniggered, but Charles continued, warming to his theme:

"What he says is sort of poetical. He says 'Tea for two, and two for tea'. That's very true when you think about it..."

"Bloody silly, if you ask me!" growled the Duke.

Althorp grinned roguishly.

"Yah. Sorry about all this. Going through a bad patch and didn't realise the bimbo would dump on me."

Charles wondered what on earth he was talking about. He looked at Edward.

"What he's saying, bro'," whispered Edward, "is that the dolly did a kiss 'n' tell."

Charles was still none the wiser. The Duke put his arms behind his back and addressed Lord Althorp.

"Lesson Number One. Choose someone of your own class. Not some blabby slut.

"Lesson Number Two. Don't ever get in the papers. Is that understood?"

Althorp laughed.

"Good advice, Sir. Pity about the *Daily Mail* though."

The Duke's brow furrowed.

"What's that?"

Edward brightened.

"Yah. I saw that. All next week. It's a feature on you, Pater — ROYAL PHIL'S LOVE ROMPS."

Althorp produced a copy of the paper.

"That's right. Here it is. There's some actress and a film star. Yo! Look at the legs on that!" He gave a low whistle. "Wouldn't mind having a crack myself!"

The Duke reddened.

"Right. Meeting adjourned. We've all got work to do."

Charles sat in the room long after the others had left. Bimbo? Dump? Royal Phil? Perhaps it was some kind of orchestra?

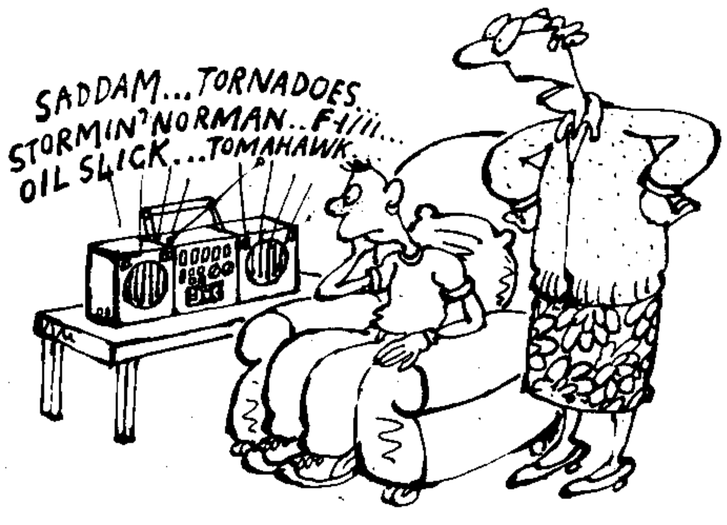
(To be continued)

The Book of Shamir

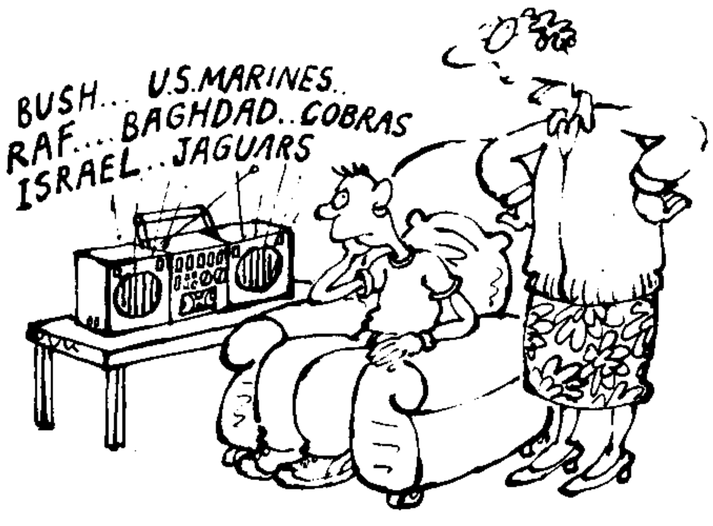
Chapter 194

1. And it came to pass that when Sad-dam had been reigning in Babylon for eleven years, he rose up and marched with all his host against the land of Ku-wait.
2. Then did all the nations wax fearful and did gather together to cast out the Saddam-ites from the land of Ku-wait.
3. And Sad-dam pondered in his heart how he might divide all those nations that stood against him, even one from another.
4. And he sayeth unto himself: "Behold, there is one thing which will set my enemies against each other, as surely as the ensnared scorpion of the desert stingeth itself even unto death with its own tail.
5. "If the children of Israel can be goaded into joining in, then verily will the Arab-ites and the Syrian-ites and the Egyptian-ites and all those that weareth the towel upon the head, then shall they unite against the children of Israel, the American-ites, the Briton-ites and all the infidel sons of Un."
6. And he told all these things unto CNN, even unto Peter, son of Arnett, who hangeth upon every word that issueth from the mouth of Sad-dam.
7. And then Sad-dam descendeth into the very bowels of the earth, even 200 cubits deep, to a place which is called Bun-Ker, which is to say made in Brit-ain.
8. And when he was hidden in that place privily, he ordered forth the mighty weapons, which are called Scud, to fall upon the children of Israel like unto the fire and brimstone which descendeth from heaven upon Gomorrah.
9. And it came to pass that the Scuds rose up and fell by night upon the tents of the children of Israel. And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth.
10. And Shamir waxed wroth and cried aloud, saying "Verily, this requireth a smiting such as the world hath never seen. For is it not written that we should give an eye for an eye and an Scud for an Scud?"
11. But when the American-ites heard these words, they were sore afraid. And they begged Shamir, even upon their bended knee, that he should withhold his arm from the smiting and exercise restraint.
12. And Shamir mocked the American-ites and answered them, saying: "Who are we, the children of Israel, to show restraint? Were we restrained when the Arab-ites fell upon us in 1948 and 1956 and 1967 and 1973 and 1982? Where would restraint have gotten us then?"
13. And, lo, even as he spoke, there was heard, like unto a mighty rushing wind, another Scud descending upon the city of Tel Aviv.
14. And the children of Israel spake unto one another, saying: "Lo, Sad-dam hath sent unto us another Scud, so low indeed that it hath made an hole 10 cubits wide and 12 cubits deep."
15. And Shamir said unto the American-ites: "Wherefore should we show restraint? For what good hath it done us? Verily, I say unto you that the hour hath come for the smiting to begin. And the cities of Babylon shall be as dust. And the people of Sad-dam will cry out for mercy."
16. And once again the American-ites waxed sore afraid. And they took counsel amongst themselves and cometh up with an bright idea, namely to send to Shamir a mighty engine of war which is called Patriot.
17. And Shamir looked upon the Patriot, and saw that it was good.
18. And Shamir cried out to them: "Lo, I am almost restrained, but for just one more thing. The children of Israel are poor, and our children have no bread.
19. Just cast your eyes upon the beaches of Eilat, for they are as empty as the sands of the desert. For the Sons of Thom cometh not to ride upon the boards of surf and to drink the coladas of piña. So what suggesteth thou with regard to this one?"
20. And Shamir holdeth forth his hand, and giveth an wink, saying unto them: "See how restrained I am. For the Scuds raineth down upon us night and day, and yet I hold my peace."
21. And at last the American-ites getteth his drift.
22. And, lo, from that day forth the coffers of Shamir were filled with much gold.
23. And all the nations of the world payeth tribute to Shamir, quite a lot of tribute as it happeneth, for that he was wondrously restrained.
24. And when the American-ites and the Britain-ites and the German-ites and the Nippon-ites had all paid him, even an hundredfold, then Shamir said in his heart "Yippee!", which is to say this one hath been an nice little earner.
25. But he also saith unto himself: "The day hath nearly come when the children of Israel shall sadly be forced to cast off restraint, like an old garment, and get on with the smiting."

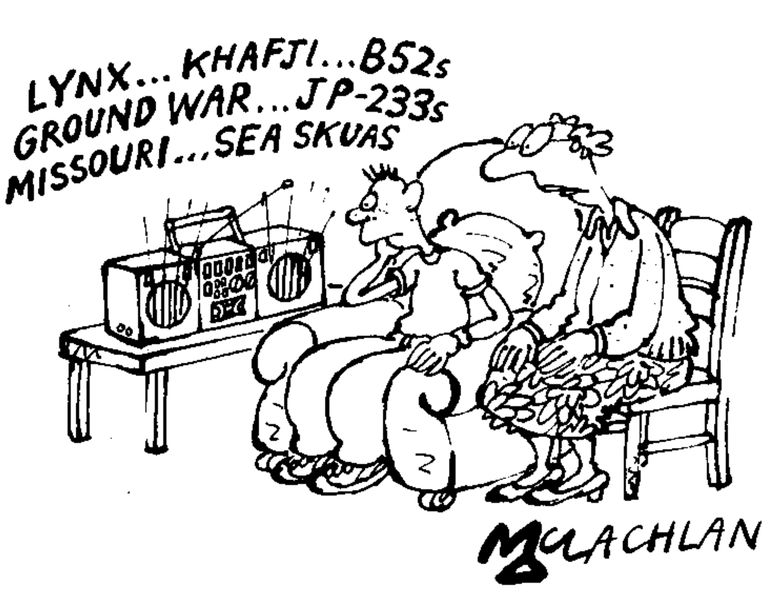
Here endeth the Lesson.



"War, war, war — that's all you listen to these days..."



*"There's **lots** of other things on radio — Melvyn Bragg, Libby Purves, Citizens, Brian Redhead, Nigel Rees, Ned Sherrin..."*



Independent World Exclusive

Iraqi soldiers surrender to *Independent*

by Our *Independent* Desert Staff
T.E. Dious

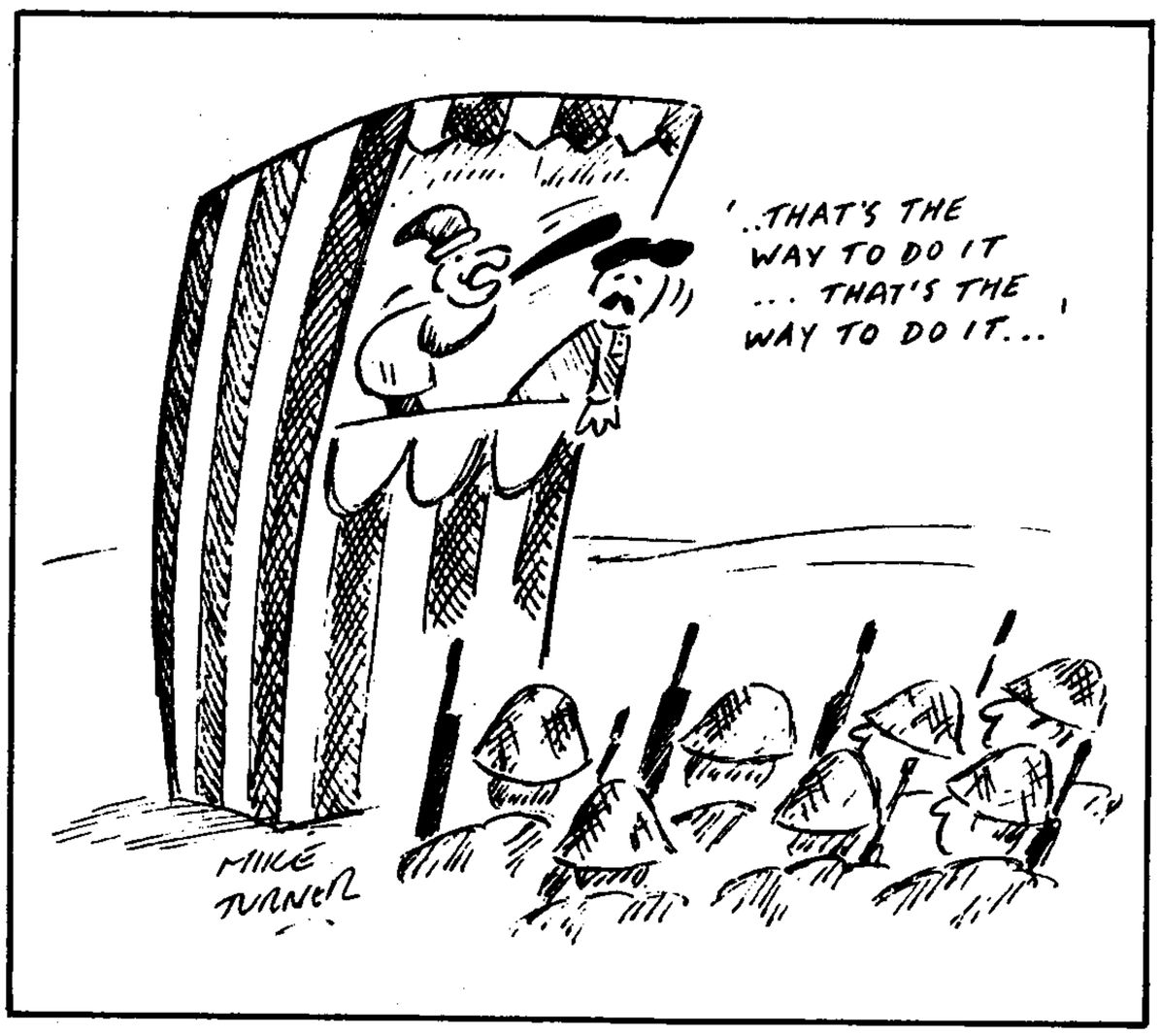
FOUR Iraqi conscripts today gave themselves up to a journalist from the *Indescribablyboring* whom they met on the Saudi border.

The Iraqis explained through an interpreter that they had in fact tried to surrender previously to a reporter from the *Guardian*.

"He told us," said the soldiers, "that whilst on the one hand he respected our wish to surrender, on the other hand it had to be said that the allied claim of a just war bore little relationship to the west's continued interference in the region for political and financial motives and that, whilst Hussein was indeed a dictator, he was no worse than many other heads of states whose regimes the Americans had cynically supported for years.

"Sadly we did not hear the rest of what he said because we spotted the man from the *Indie*."

A. Whittam-Strobes is 73.



TV TONIGHT

YES, THEY'RE NOT BACK!

EAT UP YOUR GREENS!

The following episode of the long-running BBC/ITV eco-sitcom has been withdrawn as a result of sensitivity arising from the Gulf War (and the fact that it was incredibly bad anyway).

(Silly music. Shots of Green family cycling around Solihull. Cut to Mr Green outside house attempting to connect toilet waste pipe to metal tank marked METHANE GAS CONVERTER*)*

BILLY: What are you doing, our Dad! It looks a gas!

MR GREEN *(hitting pipe with spanner)*: This is no laughing matter, Billy.

BILLY: So you mean it's not laughing gas, then?

MR GREEN: Why you...

(Enter Mrs Green, carrying cups of hot Carob-and-Watercress Infusion-Style Drink With No Added Bran and a pile of golden-brown sugar-free Beetroot Flapjacks)

MRS GREEN: How long will it be before we can use the toilet?

MR GREEN: I've explained to you already, our Mum, that to complete the fuel conversion I have to put this male bolt into this female joint...

MRS GREEN: I'm surprised you remember how...

MR GREEN *(ignoring her)*: We are too reliant on oil.

BILLY: Oil say!

MR GREEN: Will you let me finish? It'll only take a minute.

MRS GREEN *(to herself)*: Usually less...

(Enter Debbie carrying banner reading KEEPING PETS IS SLAVERY*)*

DEBBIE: Our Mum! I heard that! Dad's working hard to convert our human waste into methane so we can run the car without using oil, and what are you doing? Poking fun!

MRS GREEN: At least the *fun* gets poked!

DEBBIE: Mam!

MR GREEN *(connecting hose to old 2CV car)*: Stand back everyone!

BILLY: Is there going to be a big bang?

MRS GREEN: I wish!

DEBBIE: Shut up, Mum. Are you sure it's safe, our Dad? You *have* followed the instructions in the OIL IS FASCISM leaflet that Sean left?

BILLY: Sean Left? He's more like a commie!

MR GREEN *(looking at leaflet)*: Just checking. Pipe A, Pipe B...

BILLY: Pipe down!

MRS GREEN: If *you* don't pipe down, lad, there'll be no cabbage and lentil jam on your toast at tea!

MR GREEN *(reading aloud)*: "When gas pressure from decomposing bodily waste material reaches maximum mark on dial, turn on level full and press blue ignition button located under release valve."

DEBBIE: Before we start, Dad, shouldn't we bow our heads in prayer?

(They do so)

MRS GREEN: O, Peaceful Spirit of the Earth! You offer us your rich resources in plenty without us having to plunder your sacred womb for oil in Arabia. Hark unto us now as we turn to other sources to speed us on our journey both in the car and on the highways of this earthly life.

ALL: Absolutely right! Well done, Mum, etc.

MR GREEN: OK Billy. You read out that final instruction and I'll sit in the driver's seat.

BILLY *(puts on gas mask)*: Mmm... mm... ga... mmm ga mmm erh... mm...

MR GREEN: Is it the red button?

BILLY: Mmmm... Mmm... Mmm...

MR GREEN: Red? Right.

BILLY: Mmmm... mmmm... mmm...

MR GREEN: Red it is then.

(There is a huge explosion which takes roof off house. Cut to hospital where Mr Green is in bed surrounded by family. Debbie is wearing a t-shirt saying CUT FLOWERS ARE MURDER. *Doctor enters)*

DOCTOR: How are we feeling, Mr Green? I've brought you some *petroleum* jelly to rub on your bruises. Very soothing. Use a lot of it.

DEBBIE: Eco-terrorist!

BILLY: Don't be *crude*, Debbie! Anyway, there's one consolation on the oil front, Dad. We didn't use *any* petrol in the car getting here.

MR GREEN *(feebly)*: Good. Why's that?

BILLY: 'Cos we all came in the ambulance.

MR GREEN: Groan...

ENDS

ANNOUNCER: Next week's hilarious episode will not be shown either due to a scene in which Debbie sings John Lennon's GIVE PEACE A CHANCE to a rottweiler savaging an old-age pensioner outside Everton's pet shop.

GULF WAR — Eye Picture Probe

Where Britain's intelligentsia stands

Lady Magnesia Freelove, historian and hostess

War is always horrible. But there are times when it can be justified. For instance, when the Sandineasdas overthrew the American-backed dictatorship of President Samosa. If you want my full views on this you'd better speak to my husband.

Sir Perishing Worthless, voluptuary and libertine *(shurely 'philosopher and political commentator'? Ed)*

Lying on the pillows at the home of my fiancée Lady Embonpoint, I try to think of un bonne point (!) to make in my column. War can be a beautiful thing. Very like love. You make love, you make war, you make it up as you go along. I say the allies should nuke Baghdad now.

Harold Pinter, the world's greatest living ex-playwright

The Americans are bastards. Just look what they did in Grenada, Panama, Nicaragua and Vietnam. Where was the UN when the Sandinistas got voted out of office? No bloody invasion then. Bastards.

Rabbi Lionel Blue, rabbi and broadcaster

Hullo Brian, hullo Sue. You know, when I woke up this morning I felt ever so gloomy, what with all the news about the war. But then I remembered a little song my granny used to sing to me during the Blitz. How did it go? *"When the clouds are grey, and bombs are in the air, then drink a bowl of chicken soup and say a little prayer."*

Sir Auberon Wargs, autobiographer and oenophiliac

Why should we fight for a bunch of randy towelheads, led by His Excellency Prince Mahmound-al-ben-Mustafa-Fukh, the 73-year-old hereditary ruler of wherever it is? Some ghastly little hole in the desert without a decent bottle of claret to be found anywhere, full of stinking camels covered in weeping sores. To hell with the lot of them, that's what I say.

Dr Jonathan Miller, Renaissance man and uomo universale

As Noam Chomsky has rightly said, war is a terrible thing, particularly when the Americans are involved. It was the great 17th-century Belgian anatomist de Krooning who once said "De bello non est disputandum." Kafka, I am sure, would have agreed.

Margaret Dribble, the world's greatest novelist

I blame this war on Mrs Thatcher. It was her bellicose warmongering that got us in this mess in the first place. I believe people will eventually agree with me that this war is a human tragedy almost as bad as the poll tax. The sooner Mrs Thatcher resigns the better.

Mohammed Al-Haroun *(formerly the novelist Salman Rushdie)*

I am right behind Iran on this one, wherever they stand, and support their impressive and statesmanlike leader Rafsanjani. All praise to Allah.

WAS ST PAUL GAY?

10 tell-tale signs

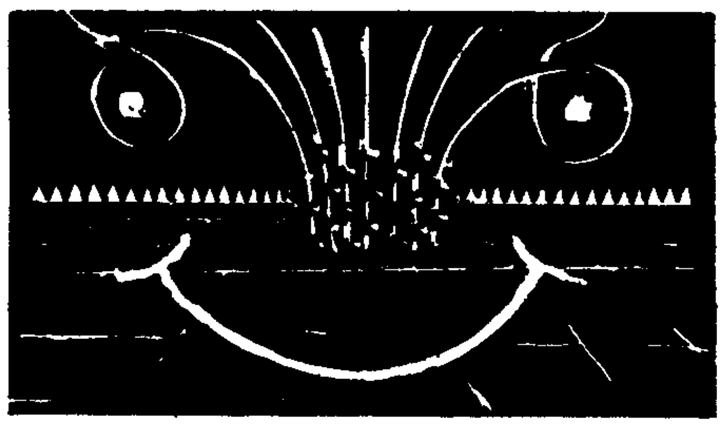
Issued by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Spong on behalf of the First Episcopalian Church of American Crazies

1. **Wore a dress.**
2. **Hated women.**
3. **Wrote long incomprehensible letters in Greek to other men.**
4. **Open-toed sandals.**
5. **Travelled widely in Arab countries.**
6. **Shipwrecked with number of sailors.**
7. **Had "friend" called Timothy.**
8. **Put to death by Romans for unspecified offence.**
9. **Large moustache, according to biblical scholars.**
10. **Lead singer with Village People.**

(That's quite enough, Ed.)

"I can't seem to get through to you anymore"

DIARY



ESTHER RANTZEN CBE

Busy, busy, busy. I'm always in a rush, rather like Mr Tony RUSH, a personnel manager from Brentford, who, frankly, must be RUSHed off his feet! And his wife, Mrs Margaret RUSH probably never draws breath, she's in so much of a RUSH! And as for their children, Jack and Hayley RUSH, they must both be in quite a little RUSH too (groan!).

As you may have gathered by now, you have to have a highly-developed sense of humour in a job like mine. My diary is full all this year, and I have just inked in my last available date in December. The Dean of St Paul's has written a very kind letter asking if myself and my husband, Desmond, and our children Esther (11) and Des (9) will pose in a *tableau vivant* for their Christmas crib. It's a great honour, and I feel very humbled to be playing the part of the Virgin Mary, with my daughter as the Infant Jesus, my son as Joseph and my husband Desmond as either a donkey or a mangy old piece of straw. If it does anything to make the Christmas message — an end to all child abuse — more relevant, then it must be a good thing.

It makes me feel very humble to think that we are the nation's choice as the Holy Family. We'll do the job as well as we humanly can. One small point: if only the *That's Life* team (and we ARE a team, let's not forget) had been around in Bethlehem, we'd have been down on that innkeeper like a ton of bricks.

Names that make you chuckle (1): I note that a bank-manager from Epping I have just made up is called "MR TOILET-PAPER". Worth approaching for a wee, wee loan, maybe?!!

We've been getting a lot of complaints recently from viewers who have bought themselves trouser-belts from leading high-street retailers. "I pulled my belt too tight," writes a typical viewer, Mr P. Randall from Uxbridge. "And I found that my waist was painful all day."

The same happened to Mr Trevor Johns from Croydon, who pulled his belt a full *two notches* too tight. "I was in no mood to let the matter rest," Mr John told us. "So I took my complaint direct to the manufacturer. Eventually, I got a letter back saying that the fault was MINE and that I shouldn't have pulled it so tight in the first place!!"

Well, we thought we'd take this scandal further, and we rang a Mr Stephens of The High Wycombe Belt Company in High Wycombe. "We've been getting a number of complaints about your belts," we said.

"Oh yes?" he said.

"OH YES!" we said. "A lot of our viewers have found that if they tie them too tight, they spend the rest of the day in some pain."

We must admit to being absolutely stunned by the reply Mr Stephens then gave us.

"They've only got themselves to blame," he said.

"But why have you not fitted SAFETY LOCKS to your belts, to stop people pulling them too tight and hurting themselves?" we asked. Eventually, Mr Stephens said he would *"look into the matter"*.

We wonder just how many people will have to walk around with painful waists before LEGISLATION is brought in to guard against belts that can be pulled too tight. Until that day, we have set up a special BELTWATCH number — 031-6591-3947 — for you to ring, day or night, if you feel that your belt has been pulled too tight. So far, there have been no deaths from overtight belts, but we fear that a tragedy can't be too far off. If you hear of such an awful tragedy, do let us know, and we'll do our best to feature it on a forthcoming show, perhaps with a song-and-dance routine from our very own Doc Cox.

It has come to my notice in recent months that a great many very sick people — there's no other word for them — are biting the heads off goldfish. Though we haven't yet heard of a single instance of this growing epidemic that is sweeping the country, we know that the vast majority of the great British public will wish to help us stamp it out. We have plans afoot to place adhesive tape around the necks of all goldfish registered in this country so as to deter these evil people. Until then, if you SEE a goldfish with its head bitten off, or if indeed you ARE a goldfish with its head bitten off, please, please, *please* give us a call on our special GOLDFISHWATCH day and night service. You can choose whether you would prefer to speak to a trained doctor or direct to a goldfish, and your call will be taken in total confidence.

Names that make you chuckle (2): I couldn't help but notice that the man who elected to share his marital bed with yours truly rejoices in the surname of "WILL-COCK". Here's hoping that Where there's a WILL, there's a COCK!

These days, it seems as if the whole country is talking about just one thing: who will be the lucky winner of our auditions to find a new *That's Life* presenter? We've been frankly dumbfounded by the great mass of sheer talent out there. Thirty of you, for instance, came up with really first-class impersonations of Frank Spencer saying "Ooooh, Betty!", and there were no less than fifty-eight applicants who were able to touch the tips of their noses with their tongues!

What a brilliant lot of people you are! From this wealth of talent, it's our job to choose a new presenter — no easy task! So far, we've whittled the original number down, first to fifteen, and then to ten, as one or two pulled out when they heard that the job of presenting *That's Life* is not all fun and skittles. Before any new *That's Life* presenter reaches your screens, he has undergone not only one helluva lot of sheer hard work but also a full castration under medical supervision. Some of them just weren't up to making this sacrifice, so, regrettably, we had to wish them the best of luck elsewhere. The others now are in full possession of the necessary high voices, uncertain smiles and what we call "deference to Esther" that is required from a *That's Life* presenter, and in future weeks we'll be awarding their penises mounted on plaques to the viewers who come up with the sausage or frankfurter which looks most like a *That's Life* presenter's PRIVATE PART!! Happy hunting!

OWING to a hiccup in production last week's Letters Page was badly printed. We appologise to readers and reprint most of the letters below.

Camden New Journal

wrote, "The potential applications of artificial electromagnetic fields are wide-ranging and can be used in many military or quasi-military situations. Some of the potential uses include dealing with terrorist groups, crowd control, *controlling breeches of security at military installations,* and antipersonnel techniques in tactical warfare."

Weekend Grauniad

Literary Review

Iggy Pap

Francesca
Roger Scruton
(Sinclair-Stevenson, £13.95)
Asya
Michael Ignatieff
(Chatto, £13.99)

HERE'S A poser: why did the authors of these novels publish them? They're both brainy men. They've both got other things to do. And they're both old enough to know better.

It can only be that they believe that writing a novel will automatically waft them into the welkin. The humdrum philosopher and the dreary columnist will be left far behind as immortality beckons. They will be *artists*. Their names will go down to fame. Homer. Dante. Shakespeare. Scrotum. And Iggy. They can see it now.

Wrong. Novels have to be made novels, not just called novels. These novels are simply not novels to anyone more demanding than a cataloguer. Both are devoid of linguistic or formal interest. Both therefore have no interest at all except as reflections of their authors, should you for some reason be interested in their authors. If you are, they're rewarding enough. For *Francesca* and *Asya* both crudely project on to the main female character the qualities the author most aspires to: English poshness for Scrote; posh Russianness for Ig.

Francesca's the direr. Roger Scruton came from an ever so 'umble background but now he goes out with a nice bit of posh (Jessica, as it happens). Accordingly the hero of his novel, clever Colin, is the son of a lowly schoolmaster but he has a romance with aristocratic Francesca from the local big house ("the Hall"). It doesn't go well. Francesca's very doomy. Only at the end is it revealed why. She's had a fatal illness all this time!

This nerdy plot is told with dreadful ineptitude. No thought has been given to where the narrative voice comes from (so it just comes from Scruton), or to what needs to be told and what not (so it's just whatever catches Scruton's eye). His own face shows through all the time and it's plug ugly. Colin and Roger believe in the importance of sucking up to aristocrats. *("In his heart he believed in the legitimacy of institutions: he believed in law, in ceremony, in the colourful nonsense of condign punishment. He believed in the ruling class, in privilege, in heredity and customary power....")*

The lower classes and racial minorities are dismissed with contempt. The novel cheerfully speaks of London's "Pakistani peasants and proletarian Turks". A fight at Colin's workplace is described in the disgustingly stereotyped language of the Worsthorne *Sunday Telegraph* comment pages. *"One day a gang of morons waited for him in the vat house, anxious to readjust his social standing to their own requirements. They leapt out, fists flailing, boots chopping the air. As luck would have it, Colin was carrying the ruler with which he checked the levels in the valves. It had a sharp edge of alloy, and by wielding it in a circle about his head, he was able to gash two cheeks, half sever an ear, and poke out a glutinous eye before running for the gate and safety."*

The relished cruelty of that has nothing to do with imagination or the art of fiction and is wretchedly typical of the book. Scruton cannot restrain his contemptuous urge to abuse common people, those "stuffed puppets", so as to emphasize his distance from them. *Francesca* inadvertently tells you more than you wanted to know about the asperity of Scrote's character and politics. It will be useful to students of the psychopathology of the low-born theoretical, or as it used to be called "New" Right, if to nobody else.

Iggy's *Asya* is a more amiable absurdity, being an expression of vanity rather than hatred. Ignatieff is, of course, a classic Canadian bore. But he likes to think of himself rather as soulfully Russian (as well as brilliant, scholarly, pretty, the thinking woman's Mr Spock). His last book *The Russian Album* was one long ad for this Russianness: a factual study of his own family background, all "Tsarist adventures, survivors of revolutions, heroic exiles".

Then he said he found the idea of turning the subject into fiction "tempting". *"My characters would be just sufficiently grounded in a real past to be authentic and yet they would do my bidding... In creating them I would create myself. In the end the idea of fiction foundered on the realisation that such a novel would be peopled by characters neither real in themselves nor faithful to their originals... Fiction would be a betrayal."*

Asya is that fiction. Via the central character, Asya, it describes the history of the century.

Nearly every important scene of *Asya* has its precursor in *The Russian Album*. The estate Asya grows up on near Smolensk is where Iggy's grandmother Natasha grew up; Kislovodsk where she goes during the war is where his grandparents went; Asya's son is killed during the war on the family estate, fighting for the Germans, as was a member of Ignatieff's family; Ignatieff himself went looking for family graves in the cemetery of Novodevichy convent in Moscow; so does Asya in the last scene of the book.

Hurtling through the century, in cliché after cliché, *Asya* has no reality. The attempts made to tie this non-existent character into history, let alone the Meaning of Life, are pathetic, consisting of Asya perpetually asking herself ridiculous Russian questions ("did she, Asya, really know what happiness was?" — try it with an accent) and dodgy bits of historical context being bunged into the middle of already crappy sentences ("'Whether good or bad', she repeated, looking out through the windows of the car at the city on fire with the prospect of war: 'he is my fate'").

True, Ignatieff has tried to shape the story with a dominant metaphor: but he's chosen the River of Life! *Asya* literally falls into it at the beginning of the book and the image comes clanging back at key moments. "What a river of suffering still flowed deep inside her!" and so wetly forth.

Then the portrayal of Asya, feminist Iggy's pretence of seeing the world through her eyes, is comically undercut by his own male preoccupation with breasts and nipples. Whenever Asya's on the scene he always grabs an eyeful of her "little ellipses with their raspberry nipples", "her nipples tiny and erect", "those adorable breasts". He even works them into his history theme, when her husband returns from an absence — "he kissed her and unbuttoned her blouse, parting its folds and caressing her breasts, drawing the memory of them and their reality together in his hands."

This is *not* the way to outlive marble and the gilded monuments of princes. If Scruton and Ignatieff really want to be remembered, maybe they'd better start sponsoring park-benches.

Books & Bookmen

☐ THE SECOND annual British Book Awards dinner, sponsored by *Publishing News*, was held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel last week. Those who remember last year's inaugural dinner, hosted by the appalling Lord Lichfield, will appreciate what a ghastly event this is.

Highlights included a pretentious attempt at satire by Stephen Bayley, judge for the Book Jacket of the Year category. Bayley thought the slow handclap he received was because he had offended publishing worthies; in fact it was the inordinate length of his speech and his affected delivery that infuriated the audience.

The award for Book Promotion of the Year went to Century for its work publicising Marsha Hunt's memoirs, *Joy*. Strangely, it went unmentioned that Marsha Hunt has since changed publishers precisely because she thought the publicity department at Century wasn't up to scratch. And can it be an accident that Century spent much of its advertising budget in *Publishing News*?

Editor of the Year was Dan Franklin of Secker & Warburg. Selected by a panel of literary agents, Franklin admitted in a video clip that he depends heavily on his editorial team of four and that his most important achievement had been to buy an American book (hence, a book that had already been edited by somebody else). Cynics suggested that he should have received an award as Manuscript Buyer of the Year.

'Bookworm'

Health education

That's Ludicrous!

WHILE BBC television's campaigning first lady Esther Rantzen has been busy setting up public school helplines, she has been scooped by a tiny BBC *radio* show probing a public body on whose board she actually sits.

La Rancid is a government-appointed member of the board of the Health Education Authority (HEA), an outfit that itself seems to be in dire need of surgery.

Rantzen's board is responsible for overseeing the HEA's efficient running and the HEA's drectors approached her when they learnt that Radio 4's *Face the Facts* was investigating the authority and about to reveal its perpetual management chaos. Was it possible, they wondered, that Eshter could have the programme pulled or tampered with? Certainly not. This was a naive request that doubtless surprised even La Rancid and was the idea of the HEA's media supremo David Bedford.

Face the Facts' target was not so much the work of the HEA or its staff, but its inadequate management and its dealings with the Department of Health. For example, the authority decided soon after its creation in 1987 that it did not need a qualified finance director on its board, nor to have one present at its meetings. It was only after consistent audit complaints and prompting from the Department of Health that a finance director was finally appointed last May.

Given the parsiomony in the NHS the delay is perhaps surprising, but then the HEA is an exception in the NHS — a health authority that's flush with money. Dr Spencer Hagard, its chief executive, earns around £54,000 a year. With only 189 staff and a budget of nearly £30m he is paid far more than general managers of other health authorities who are responsible for thousands of staff and budgets of hundreds of millions. Oh, and the patients of course.

The HEA's annual "operational planning" is a farce in which directors jostle with one another to claim as much money as they can, only later deciding what they will do with it. Having grabbed from the overflowing honeypot, they sit tight on their spoils all year and then madly spend between January and the end of March when the financial year comes to an end. It is not unusual for between 30 percent and 50 percent of the annual budget to be spent in these three months — the same time of year as the rest of the NHS is trying to stay in budget by shutting wards and beds, cancelling operations and sending patients home.

Dr Hagard has been chief executive for nearly four years and the HEA could be said to be in more chaos now than when he inherited the old Health Education Council (HEC). At least the HEC had a qualified finance professional reporting at board meetings and a controlled purchasing system. At best, management at the HEA has been naive.

While Sir Donald Maitland, the authority's chairman, happily convinces himself that all in the garden is rosy, grumbles at the health department suggest that the gravy train may be about to be derailed. Virginia Bottomley, the junior health minister, visited the HEA last October after various informative letters arrived at her department.

There are clearly doubts about the authority's ability to protect the public purse and interest. Isn't it odd, for example, that four directors and numerous senior managers have resigned? After all, the usual NHS reason for high staff turnover (bad pay) doesn't apply at the HEA which boasts some of the best paid NHS positions in the country. And doesn't it bother the health department that the HEA's accounts have had to be qualified for the last two years?

The big question that must now be concerning La Rancid and her fellow authority members is surely the one being asked by HEA staff: if the authority members know about the mess the authority is in, why haven't they done anything about it? And if they didn't know until the recent BBC programme, why not?

Corporate finance

The listing bank

WITH 4,000 jobs and nearly 200 branches set to go this year in the wake of rolling bad debts, customers of Midland bank may wonder just who "the listening bank" has been listening to in recent years.

In the case of John Archer, a manager at Midland's corporate banking centre in Brentwood, it was John Foulston, the bullish boss of Atlantic Computer, the flexible leasing people. In fact Archer listened so well that Foulston — who was killed in a freak racing accident in 1987 — left him some £5,000 in his will "in appreciation of his down-to-earth advice and in recognition of the effort he made many years ago to understand Atlantic Computer's business".

But Archer's "down-to-earth advice" cost Midlands dearly when Atlantic collapsed last April, bringing down John Gunn's enterprising British & Commonwealth tightrope act with it. And Archer's "effort to understand Atlantic Computer's business" must surely have been the envy of Atlantic's receivers, Price Waterhouse, faced with "less than prudent" accounting procedures and a mysteriously large financial "black hole" in the vicinity of Atlantic's Staines HQ.

Barely three months later, another of Archer's enterprising customers, the Blackspur Group, fell apart at the seams leaving Midlands stitched up for around £20 million. Blackspur had been set up by Nick Thomas, the former UK sales director at Atlantic. It operated the same type of flex-lease deals as Atlantic.

At the beginning of last year, Archer was invited by Midland to consider the virtues of early retirement. But his retirement was plainly short-lived — he immediately joined Blackspur Leasing whose bank account he had looked after so well in the past.

Blackspur Leasing has now won the courtship of Inspector Knacker, who has spent the last few months collecting statements from Blackspur's 200-plus lease-holders.

Strangely enough, Brentwood is the only corporate banking centre to be completely closed by the Midland.

Swiss banking

Dinar party

STATISTICS published by the Swiss National Bank showing how much money has been moved from the Middle East to Swiss banks since the outbreak of the Gulf war make very interesting reading — but they only tell half the story.

Figures released on 5 February showed that $2.3 billion had been transferred, and the Swiss National Bank estimates that the dollar obligation of the 137 Swiss banks to Middle East clients is now $6.7 billion.

But the obligations may be much, much higher. Swiss banks have secretly been buying millions of Kuwaiti dinars at discounted sums from middlemen. The money was stolen and smuggled out by Iraqi agents who hoped that a reinstated government would honour them at face value and not issue a new currency.

Even more interesting than the millions of dinars stolen by the Iraqis are the Kuwaiti gold reserves — thought to be worth more than US$20 billion — held in vaults and seized after the invasion. The gold had been bought from UBS and was stamped as such, but has now been sold on the open market to help the Iraqi war effort — all via the good offices of bankers Credit Suisse.

Privatisation News

Passing Wind

A LUXURIOUS hall had been booked opposite Parliament and even John Wakeham, energy secretary, had found time as chairman of the cabinet war committee to turn up for what was to have been a big day for the future of British electricity — and for the Treasury's budget calculations.

But where were the two leading players? For although 60 percent of the two electricity generating companies were going on sale and the glossy privatisation prospectus had been published, the chairmen of the two companies — Sir Graham Day of PowerGen and Sir Trevor Holdsworth of National Power, who between them earn £400,000 a year for working two-to-three days a week — decided it was not even worth turning up.

They left it instead to their two chief executives, John Baker and Ed Wallis, which gives a clear indication of how the future electricity industry will be run: both are former executives of our old friend, the Central Electricity Generating Board.

That Day and Holdsworth didn't turn up for the sale launch begs an obvious question: just what are they paid £400,000 for? Their absence was particularly conspicuous at a time when efforts are being made to persuade the public and potential shareholders that the market will ensure that the two companies, preparing to shut down power stations and sack 5,000 staff, do not throw money around in the way that was done when they were wholly national property.

Of course the real reason for the existence of the two chairmen is to disguise the fact that National Power and PowerGen (NatPowerGen) is just the old, dominant CEGB monopolising the new electricity market as it did the old.

Peculiarly, they will also trade knowing that the best way to make money is by producing less electricity. NatPowerGen is thrice blessed every time it shuts down a power station. It can sell the land, sharing the profit with the Government. Once the property market picks up, a site suitable to be used as a hypermarket or a block of offices would attract an enormous price. In addition, the sale reduces the electricity available and therefore the grid price for it goes up because electricity prices are based on supply and demand. Thirdly, all the station staff become redundant and their wages are saved.

Lest the public worry that *not* producing electricity becomes too tempting, the answer from NatPowerGen is that the two companies really will try to keep us supplied, even though they no longer have a statutory obligation to do so. They will do it, they say, by building cheap gas turbines which employ few staff and have cheap fuel which is also "clean". (For just how "clean" see *Eyes passim.*)

The really cheap, clean energy of course is the one we were promised by the CEGB: namely wind power, which according to the last annual statement from the CEGB was to produce 1,000 megawatts of electricity. It could make that promise with confidence, knowing that it could rely on objections by misguided environmentalists saving them from having to build windparks all over the countryside.

But there was one area where there would be no protests: at sea where the wind is stronger and more consistent and where, according to the CEGB's own scientists, the wind energy is sufficient to supply all the electricity Britain needs.

The CEGB was happy to announce that it was negotiating to construct the first wind turbine five kilometres off the Norfolk coast. But there is no mention of that in the new prospectus. It has been removed. Off-shore windpower would demand major investment now, with the benefits coming in later. And under the unreal system of "discounting" used by the financial world, wind energy, with the "fuel" provided free, appears as an expensive way of generating electricity in the balance sheets. That would not appeal to the sharebuyers whose money is being sought by Wakeham. So it has been quietly dropped. At least, they hope that it will pass off quietly and won't be noticed.

In the City

AS THE expected-to-be record-breaking Blue Arrow trial gets under way (it's anticipated to run for up to a year) others in the City are speculating on the likely outcome of that other Blue Arrow investigation — into the somewhat over-generous £25 million loan made to Teflon tycoon Peter De Savary. The interest-free money, it will be recalled, disappeared in December 1988 into the mists of Canvey Island and a planned redevelopment of an industrial site there.

Just why then Blue Arrow chairman Tony Berry felt so generous, what was the deal laid out by De Savary and what other directors, including Tory MP Norman Tebbit, knew and approved has for almost two years been the subject of an investigation requested by Tebbit's former civil servants at the Department of Trade & Industry.

The inspectors' report is almost concluded and is expected to be passed to the DTI in the next month or so. But what happens then is still uncertain. Those with a line on the inspectors' thinking do not as yet anticipate a further criminal prosecution to follow that over the successful £837 million rights issue that never was. Instead it is expected that the DTI will settle for the report's expected public reprimands of varying severity for the main players.

TEBBIT'S former parliamentary colleague Sir Edward du Cann may also be in for future embarrassment as a result of a past business association.

It is understood that the Serious Fraud Office is approaching showtime on the investigation into the Homes Assured mortgage/insurance group which collapsed in August 1989. Du Cann resigned as a director days before the crash.

As yet none of the key figures (aka targets) in the investigation have been seen or interviewed. That stage though is about to be reached. Hopefully there will be no need for the inspector to disturb anyone with early morning calls armed with Section 2 "answer or else" notices.

ELSEWHERE on Elm Street it seems the SFO may be slipping into its old nightmare ways with its handling of the Dunsdale Securities case. For reasons best known to the SFO and Monty ("Innocent rich men in suits a speciality") Raphael, who represents Dunsdale's Robert Miller, the case has been switched from Southwark to the outer regions of the Central Criminal Court at Snaresbrook.

Just why such a high profile case should be assigned to Snaresbrook is perhaps not entirely due to reasons of trial overload. It is no doubt entirely accidental that Snaresbrook is renowned as the most lenient of the Old Bailey satellites. This may not be entirely irrelevant.

Nor does Snaresbrook also exactly field the judicial first eleven when it comes to judges: another factor which might just be helpful, especially as the SFO is expected to provide a glowing testimonial to Miller's cooperation. Just how much the judge may also be told about the facts of the case and the impact on Dunsdale clients remains to be seen.

Snaresbrook is also a court where cases receive minimal publicity. That may be changed, however, by the Dunsdale result. It could be back to the Serious Farce Office.

"HE WANTED the best — he always wanted the best of everything," says interior designer Gulderen Tekvar, explaining how, on behalf of Polly Peck chairman Asil Nadir, she came to spend millions of shareholders' money on the paintings, antique furniture and *objets d'art* which filled the company's Berkeley Square headquarters to overflowing.

Just how much was spent, without so much as a shareholders' nod, is now a matter of serious debate among the Polly Peck administrators. Initially the value was put at £6-£7 million, but now the sale is expected to realise at best £3 million. Even with the fall in the antique and art markets and the cash squeeze, that is still a large drop.

Exactly how much the collection did cost is one question the administrators are likely to address. So too is whether company money was used to buy some of the paintings, guns and other objects which have been removed by Nadir with the claim that he paid with his own funds. Another issue is what commissions may have been paid to Mrs Tekvar, wife of the Polly Peck architect who was a former director of bankrupt Nadir family company South Audley Management, or others.

Finally there is the little matter of whether such huge sums of company money could ever rightfully have been expended without shareholders' approval or at least knowledge. Clearly another triumph for Polly Peck's abject non-executive directors.

REVELATION of the full £20 million extent of the provisions to be made by locomotive engineers Telfos against its investment disasters has shown that few were the directors past or present who did not share both benefit and blame.

But too little attention has been paid to the role of stockbroker Willie West, the Australian end of Durlacher West — formerly Douglas Le Mare of Usual Suspects fame.

West's company AC Holdings was a one-time major shareholder in Telfos. Douglas Le Mare helped to underwrite last year's rights issue which raised almost £14 million from unsuspecting shareholders. Douglas Le Mare partner Stephen Parris, a former Telfos director, was the link that introduced Telfos to Corporate Data Services which has cost £2.4 million.

West's firm was also involved in compiling the portfolio of shares which was switched into shares in the Durlacher West promoted Smaller Companies Investment Trust (director Telfos chairman Stephen Cockburn). The Telfos investment certainly became smaller. A £1.4 million loss taken when that switch was made only last October has now grown to £2 million. Another West company, Principal Hotels, which acquired AC, has links to Newgate Communications which is estimated to have cost Telfos £700,000.

But then with Telfos writing off all but £65,000 of its £695,000 investment in its other stockbroker, Fiske & Co (chairman Telfos director Clive Harrison whose firm also sponsored SCIT) West was merely following the Telfos tradition.

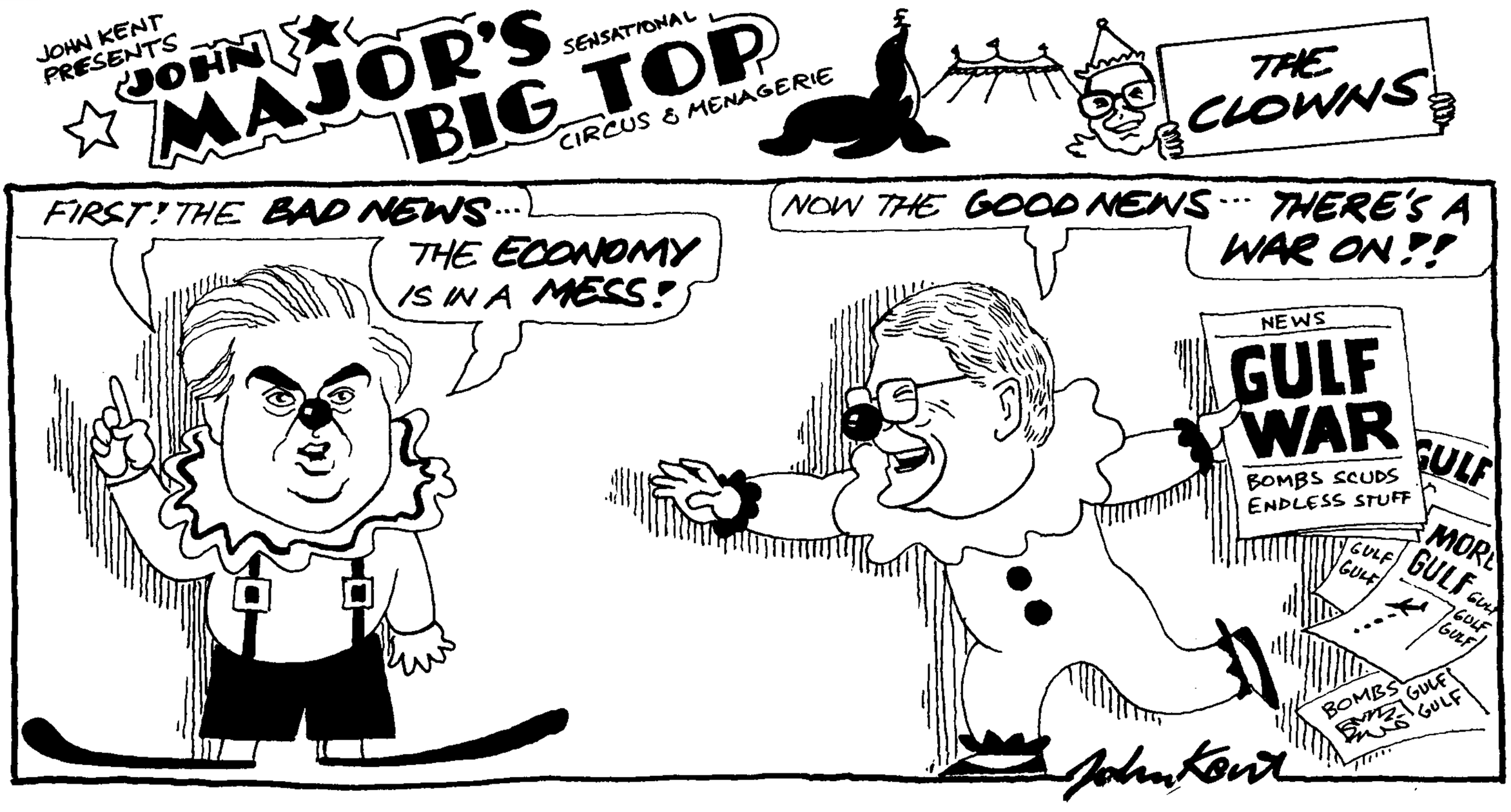
As shareholders ponder their somewhat dark future with the shares at 71p and the William Cook 114p bid out the window, they might care to ask themselves, if not those concerned, the £20 million question: How were auditors Price Waterhouse able to find necessary provisions and losses of £7 million in October and a further £13 million in February when they found no need for such items at the time of the rights issue at 180p last July?

Could it be yet another case of auditors (PW's Birmingham branch) forgetting who their duty is really to and giving too much credence to what directors said? Doubtless Price Waterhouse will be hoping that the Midland Bank continues its support for Telfos. Otherwise such questions about what the auditors knew and when they knew it could become an issue of expensive legal liability.

AN UNUSUAL unsigned editorial on the front page of the *Sunset Times* business section on 3 February demanded "Lamont must cut rates now.... "Perfectly good businesses are going to the wall," it warned.

The next week a front page business section item forecast: "City to urge early cut in base rates." None of these comments naturally have any relation to the £4 billion bank borrowings of *Sunday Times* proprietor Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation.

'Slicker'



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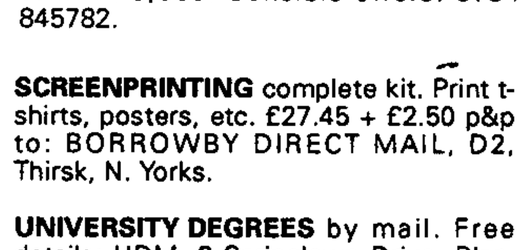

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DONATOR OF OVER £120,000 to these columns desperately needs similar help. Please keep "help when you can afford it circle" going. God bless. Box 8361.

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YOUNG WRITER seeks £1,000 to continue writing. Highest donation gets book dedication. Jason O'Leary. Box 9561.

STUDENT GAGGING for it — money that is. Anything considered. Box 9661.

GRANTLESS, MATURE student urgently needs money to survive course! Box 9761.

DESPERATE FEMALE student needs £4,000 to avoid serious mental breakdown. Help! Box 9861.

FAECES, RIGHT IN IT. Need £10,000, no donation too small. Please help. Box 9961.

MONEY REQUIRED for expedition. Debts tie our feet. Thanx. Box 10161.

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WORD PROCESSOR. Need WP to land swimming thoughts. Keen writer diving in. Disconnected notes multiply. Serious saving commenced post-Xmas but financial outlook bleak. Pounds/pence will provide paper/pens if recession that bad. Abstract supplies if interested. Free copy/bubbly/wp if published. Box 7861.

YOU THINK YOU'VE got problems? Genuine hard-up final year medical student suffering £80 p/w rent, no rent rebate, diminished grant, overdraft limit used up long ago. Depressed about finances so close to finals. Going on "elective" abroad, but where's the money coming from, with 5 weeks to go? I need £3,000 in all. Can supply CV, bank statements, whatever. Loan or gift. Please help me. Box 7961.

PLEASE HELP. Abandoned woman, no work, faces starvation. Genuine. Box 8061.

YOUNG PILOT requires a sponsor to achieve a commercial pilot's licence. Willing to repay, work, anything considered. Box 8161.

ARE YOU AN "Angel"? New theatre company with good London venue booked need generous, sympathetic backers for first production. Write for further information. Any amount considered. Box 8261.

£30,000 LONG TERM loan urgently required to repay debts, learn languages and start again. Totally genuine. Box 10061.

YOUNG HARD WORKING couple desperately need £15,000 to keep business alive. Please help. Any donation appreciated. Box 8461.

I'M A WOMAN in a desperate situation: I need to get out of a rubbish relationship, ditto job and move to Rome A.S.A.P. Better climate and better food. When I say I'm desperate, I bloody well mean it - PLEASE will you send me A.S.A.P. as much as you can afford. Box 8561.

CASH NEEDED TO help rebuild shattered dream following divorce. Many debts but decent income. Quick philanthropic loan required. HELP! Box 8661.

PLEASE HELP £10,000 required to clear debts and provide me with sleep once more. I do not expect a gift. Fully employed and I will repay with interest. Desperate female. Box 8761.

POOR MAN requires 10,000 air miles for rich man's holiday. Postcards if required. Box 8861.

£15,000 URGENTLY required to clear debts and fund music co-op. Donations or investors welcome. Box 8961

DESPERATE YOUNG student musician urgently needs £10,000 to avoid bankruptcy due to ill health. Please help. Box 9061.

GRADUATE SEEKS help attaining ultimate dream — entry to medical school. Benevolent, influential physicians needed to pull strings. Favours never forgotten. Box 10361.

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PLEASE HELP Have lost my job due to illness and don't know when able to return. Thanks. Box 9261.

VOLVOBALLS Following shunt from Swedish brick have been unable to work. Solvency requires donations from other victims or guilty owners of same. Box 9361.

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BBC TELEVISION seeks single men for documentary on bachelor living — slobs, aesthetes, philanderers and misogynists all welcome. Call Lucy on 081 895 6674.

HUGH CLIVE Born Kresse 17/4/67 London. Family news. Please contact Box 10561.

CZECH MATE World's first anglo-Czechoslovakian agency. Hundreds of stunning ladies, lawyers, doctors, architects and chemists seeking marriage. 0582 25960.

EURO-THAI Connections. Beautiful Thai ladies seeking love and marriage. Full details, Leicester 0533 733202.

PROFESSIONAL MALE owner requires competent girl or lady friday to look after domestic matters and organise occasional entertaining in return for accommodation. Reply with brief live story and photograph to Box 10661.

WHERE ARE the most discerning, sophisticated, stimulating singles meetings? At THE SUPPER CLUB, of course. Why don't you join them at one of our lavish buffet dinners or Sunday brunches. Tel: 071-435 4044.

POMMIE SEEKS Kiwi female for mutual help. Box 10761.

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THE SUCCESSFUL WAY for professional people to meet is through THE PICTURE DATING AGENCY, the caring/confidential service. Be sent lists of compatible partners with their photos. For details call 071-439 7091 (days)/ 081-297 1424 (anytime).

TRAVELLING COMPANIONS bringing together like-minded people who wish to travel, UK or abroad (non-group event). Contact: P&S 071-708 4344.

MOSCOW CONNECTION. 400 lovely, cultured Russian females, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, musicians etc, seek love/marriage with similar caring gentlemen. 081-505 4095.

PENFRIENDS — USA. Make lasting friendships through correspondence. Send age, interests. Free reply. HARMONY, Box 82295PE, Phoenix, Arizona 85071, USA.

ASIAN INTRODUCTIONS. Tel: 0533 610266.

PERSON TO PERSON — Britain's brightest singles magazine. Free details (PE/2) PO Box 4, Goring RG8 9DN.

DON'T GET HUNG UP on chatlines — correspond with equal confidentiality. SAE: RSVP (PE), PO Box 136, Edinburgh EH7 5TF.

Eye Love in the Gulf

SAUDI SPECIAL Cavalry Officer unable to fire his weapon in the desert requests amusing advice and invitations on how to solve this problem. No mention of camels please. Box 10861.

MY BROTHER JIM is a single, dashing officer in the Gulf. Send correspondence and photos to Lieutenant J.A. Clare, 1st Armoured Division and Signals Regiment. BFPO 649.

SOLDIER, 25, looking for someone to share life's ups and downs by letter now, in person when I return. Box 10961.

GRID SQUARE removal subaltern needs letters from beautiful women to keep him insane. No Arabs please. Box14361.

UNATTACHED Company Chairman seeks Haute Couture fashion model for social functions. Box 1361.

BACH TO BOOGIE, Holbein to Hockney. Medical student seeks tall, civilised, unattached man with shared interests. Oxford. Box 1461.

MANX TAX EXILE, 60, married, seeks warm, mature lady for discreet relationship. Box 1561.

ROMANTIC, HARDWORKING, caring female (37) seeks a loving boyfriend. Photo please. London. Box 1661.

EDINBURGH. Professional male, 50s, attached, desires discreet daytime friendship with understanding lady. Box 1761.

TALL, GOOD LOOKING, fair haired, long legged lady, 32, seeks tall, educated male, 40s, to share the good things in life. Photo and telephone please. Box 0161.

DIVORCED LADY, early 50s, children flown nest, own house, own car, seeking cheerful chap in similar situation between 45 and 55. Love of country and music, arts essential. Photograph essential. Box 0261.

SUCCESSFUL BRITISH graduate, 50, travelling the world, seeks discreet relationship with elegant forties lady, Sussex, Kent, London. Interests both town and country. Let's meet for dinner. Photo ensures reply. Box 0361.

ELEGANT, EXCITING extrovert, ex M.D. seeks sensuous, well travelled, upmarket lady for funny, sunny, happy New Year. Box 0461.

WOMAN mid 30s, 5'5", good shape, brunette, alone. Interests: cooking, sport, travel, eating out. Non-smoker. Relocating Surrey March. Needs one good man (35-50). Home Counties. Box 0561.

FEMALE, 30 to 50, warm, attractive, married but neglected and unloved? Similar male (53), well travelled, romantic, passionate, discreet, wants to meet you. Box 0661.

COLIN IS SEEKING an interesting woman to share fun and friendship, maybe forever. I am a tall, attractive, blond, blue eyed, professional man, 35 years old, based Berks/Herts. Let's risk success together. Box 0761.

REAL WOMAN SOUGHT: feminine, attractive, sexy, well educated, 25-35. I am 45, very good looking, successful businessman, happy and affluent; looking for permanent relationship. Box 0861.

DISCERNING WOMAN, slim, personable, recently divorced, early forties, no ties, seeks just one good man (40+) for new beginnings. Cheshire/anywhere. Any offers? Box 0961.

ROUGH DIAMOND (30) seeks humorous adventuress (S.W.). Box 1061.

STRANDED AT M1/J14. Need rescuing by charming female. Practical skills an advantage. Box 1161.

IF YOU ARE an intelligent lady, 35-45, unattached, N/S living in the North West who likes country living, log fires, old movies and contentment why not write to Box 1261.

Morale boosters!
Eye Love in the Gulf advertisers are each averaging 70 replies a week!

GOOD LOOKING LADY, 39, outgoing, easygoing, seeks someone considerate, romantic, generous, passionate too! Will relocate. Box 2061.

CANADA, MAYBE? Bold lady wanted, willing to jump ship. Me: active, non-macho, non-smoker, nonconformist, good job, nice country place, S.W. Ontario (not frozen North). You: Intelligent yet un-bombastic, feminine yet unbimbostic, longing for love yet choosy. Carpe diem and sendem photem. Box 2161.

FIT, 45 YEAR OLD married, Dorset based man with sense of humour urgently seeks similar fittish lady within 50 miles for mutual stimulation and satisfaction. Absolute discretion required and guaranteed. Box 2261.

MALE LECTURER, 40, 5'10", slim, presentable, living in Northamptonshire, seeks unique female: someone unselfish, caring, sincere, loyal, who can give as well as take, and ready for interdependency and commitment to permanent relationship/marriage. Detailed personal letter, s.a.e. and photo to demonstrate sincerity essential. (No badminton freaks/embittered divorcees please!) Box 1861.

COTSWOLDS, handsome eligible chap, 32, new to area, seeks slim, statuesque lady, 23-29 in pursuit of happiness, etc. Box 1961.

GOOD LOOKING, very successful business man aged 37, seeking lady under 35, must be very attractive with a good figure and modern outlook and appreciates a man taking the lead in a relationship. You should perhaps have plenty of spare time and enjoy travel, good food and wine and being spoilt and pampered. Recent photo and phone number ensures reply. Box 3159.

TOO BUSY entrepreneur, 6ft, slim, single, 40, is determined to winter at his Caribbean villa but needs a perfect young lady to inspire him to delegate and go! Of course nobody's perfect but the wide eyes, bright mind and shiny hair of a near twenty lady could enchant the emotions to make the decisions. Phone and photo? Box 5959.

GOOD LOOKING, independent female writer, thirties, wants intelligent, unattached man for laughs, cuddles and commitment. London/Cambridge. Box 2361.

PLEASANT, EDUCATED MAN, Romantic, caring and fun-loving, wishes to meet pretty, slim, sugarly yet mature, cultured young lady 19-25, for loving and meaningful relationship. Tired of waiting for that English rose with vulnerable elegance to share his interests in romantic evenings and travelling. You are a woman of style, taste and humour, preferably non-smoking. Photo very much appreciated. Humberside/Midlands. Box 2461.

UNCONVENTIONAL MAN, blue eyes, 40, fit, travelled from Borneo to Barbados, China to Canada, have hiked, hitched, flown, sailed, ridden and railed. Have been married, am a father, written a book, this and that, wealthy and poor. Have power, imagination and energy. Living in S. France now and looking for a witty, lovely, articulate woman for international liaison. Box 3861.

LAWYER, 38, slim, presentable, fond of art, film, theatre, philosophy, restaurants, trivial conversation, skiing, seeks intelligent woman with some of the same inclinations for friendship and/or romance. Liverpool/Manchester. Box 2561.

ANTIQUE DEALER, Male, 30, good looking, well travelled, interests include the arts, good food, fast cars and having fun. Seeks a slim, attractive girlfriend (18-25) with similar interests, a good sense of humour to share jokes, good times and more. Pref, non smoker, photo appreciated. London/Surrey. Box 2661.

PROFESSIONAL SINGLE MAN seeks N/S, attractive female, not concerned about age. Interests, country, most. Central. Box 2761.

FEMALE, 52, ordinary, caring, married to miserable-ailing scrooge, seeks affluent discreet FRIEND. Long letter please. Box 2861.

UNUSUAL PROFESSIONAL bloke, 37, seeks girlfriend, equally happy canoeing the Wye, walking the Brecon Beacons or theatre going in Cardiff. Box 2961.

ROMANTIC, DISCREET, term relationship sought with very attractive, tall woman, 30s, 40s, by tall, exceptionally good looking, upmarket, unpretentious Canadian. London. Box 3061.

HANDSOME MALE MODEL 26, seeks wealthy woman. Box 3161.

ARE YOU LEGAL, honest, decent and truthful? If not, we should have fun. 32 year old male, without strings seeks female, similarly unencumbered for adventures home and away. Box 3261.

TALL, 6'5", outgoing, single, attractive City broker, 31, bored with usual dalliance seeks attractive graduate or career woman looking for action and adventure. I'm ready to roll, are you? Photo or suspender belt appreciated. Box 3361.

LIVELY, INTELLIGENT, attractive professional (30) married, seeks mature, stylish lady for discreet friendship. Photo appreciated. London. Box 3461.

BLACK BEAUTY, 30, slim, shapely, intelligent seeks unattached white professional male for commitment (London). Photo/phone number prerequisite. Box 3561.

LINCOLNSHIRE POACHER 29, seeks maiden for long winter country evenings. Are you game? Box 3661.

Ladies!
Are you vivacious? Over thirty? Our Surrey advertiser received nearly 500 replies last month!

ENGLISH MALE, 32, single, attractive, solvent. Based Middle East. Regular UK visits, needs female, any age/colour for correspondence, meetings, holidays and genuine friendship. My photo for yours. Box 3961.

GOOD LOOKING, professional male, tall, slim, 39, warm, humorous, sensitive and sensual, many and varied interests, N/S, seeks similar qualities in a slim, ideally curvy, attractive and interesting female. Photo please. London/S.E. Box 4061.

TALL, LIVELY woman, 40, professional but open-ended, divorced but not from inspiration, seeks similar man, Teesside area for socialising. Box 4161.

RUTH - OVER THE HILL eh? Just my luck. Note was nice though. Nick.

INNOVATIVE GARDENER (30) seeks country loving girl to help build and care for new business venture. More significantly for friendship, love and fun. Surrey. Box 4261.

JAMIE McCRIMMON, (37), turfed out of Tardis and exiled to Edinburgh, hankers after cosmic conjunctions with new Zoe or Victoria. No yetis. Box 3761.

CLASSY REDHEAD, loony, lively, funny, fit, attractive, attentive seeks multi-talented male, circa 1943-51, maybe advanced aviator, media megastar, pushover with Porsche, x-rated XJS, London or nearby for mutual madness. Available options write please enclosing daguerreotype. Box 4361.

BRUCE WILLIS TYPE, but cultured, mid-20s, South. Judo champion, some (bad) TV/radio acting, now company director. Hobbies — correspondent for TV magazine, co-author soap opera reference book, theatre, etc. Seeks Maddie Hayes with similar interests for decent argument. Photo/phone. Box 4461.

BBC JOURNALIST, 27, brown hair and eyes, London-based, seeks young lady for hilly walks, the usual cultural pursuits, plus occasional gigs by thirtysomething punks who should know better. Must like cats and Pizza Express. Photo please. Box 4561.

REDUCED TO A state of complete helplessness when being tickled?? Me too!! 38 yr old male, 5'8", slim build, non-smoker, seeks equally ticklish female. Photo appreciated — returned promptly along with mine. S. West area but happy to travel — especially London. Box 4661.

MANCHESTER Tall, slim, professional, marriedish but celibate male, 47, reasonably presentable seeks tall, slim, reasonably endowed lady for pubs, cinema, meals. Box 4761.

TALLISH, SLIM, professional man, 40, married, seeks discreet affectionate relationship with lively lady, any status. London/Herts. Box 4861.

PROFESSIONAL MAN (43) London, seeks broadminded, uninhibited girlfriend for steamy, uncomplicated relationship. Box 4961.

MY WIFE'S HAVING an affair — I want one too! I'm fairly handsome/wealthy/fun/cultured, age 40, Central London to Hampshire. Box 5061.

DASHED GOOD EGG, spiffing chap, wants classy young filly to roger till her ears drop off. Box 5161.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL woman, 30s, who loves life, seeks sharp-witted, like-minded male for friendship and more. Midlands or anywhere. Box 5261.

SECURITY WITH revolution? Adventure with peace? Conformity with fun? Strength with equality? Is there a slim, creative woman, mid 30s, who would like to help this man, just 50, explore life's eternal paradoxes. Box 5361.

PETITE, DARK-HAIRED lady graduate, 43, new to Cambs area, requires erudite gentleman escort for occasional trips to theatre/concerts. Box 5461.

EASY-GOING MAN, 40, wellish-off, educated, attractive, married seeks lively lady with brains for commitment but not attachment. London. Box 5561.

FUN, FROLICS needed to enliven doll existence of attractive guy, 34, discretion assured. (South East) Box 5661.

GREEK, Euro-civil servant, 39, 5'6", 78 kgs, seeks high socio-cultural level, warm, receptive, charming, petite lady, maximum 35, desiring to set up home in Brussels. Recent photo/phone please. Box 5761.

2 WAIFS, owneriess, not homeless, would love to stray with you this year. You are males, 30+ and brilliant if you respond. A.L.A. Photo appreciated. Box 5861.

A YEAR TO remember. Cherubic oriental wench (25), aspiring author, seeks comely youth for crazy, whirlwind romance. Photo/phone essential. Box 5961.

GORGEOUS POUTING blonde (with brain) wants to give her undivided attention to Mr Right. He is unattached, sensual, attractive, well educated, amusing and aged 35 to 45. Photo and brief letter please. Box 12061.

GORDIAN, successful, professional male graduate, 27, humorous, good looking, modest! Seeks attractive, adventurous, N/S female, 21-32, for romantic, sensual, harmonious macrame sessions (+ relationship?). Photo appreciated. A.L.A. London/SE. Box 6061.

AFFAIR SEEKER seeks a fair lady. Professional man, 39, 6', reasonably attractive, very romantic, traveller, sportsman and opera fanatic would like to meet an intelligent, feminine woman with a sense of humour and a pretty figure for an adventurous, exciting and lasting relationship. Box 11161.

COUNTRY LOVING gentleman, 55, graduate, but no egghead, 5'11", retired businessman set to enjoy second life seeks warm, honest, communicative lady to enjoy travel, good food, companionship and love in serious long term relationship. Photo appreciated. No financial problems. Currently locked into dead marriage which will end when I meet kindred spirit. Practicality suggests 90 miles radius Bristol. Total discretion. Why not meet for lunch/dinner? Box 11261.

UNEXPECTED, libertine, intemperate on offer to filles de joies à Londres. Box 11361.

NOW AVAILABLE. Tall, good looking, well-travelled man just got over long divorce, have own company but broke! I want to meet an educated, witty and fun woman, who is affectionate and fun. Please send photo and phone number. Box 11461.

INTELLIGENT, attractive, disillusioned Northern lady, 35, needs warm, articulate, attractive Guardian reading man with compass and sleigh. Photo please. Box 11561.

PROFESSIONAL MAN visits East Anglia/East Midlands, seeks nice, attractive lady, 30s-40s, for occasional lunch/friendship; photo appreciated. Box 11661.

WEALTHY PROFESSIONAL
married man, 45, seeks beautiful younger lady for lunch and dinner affairs in London, Rio, New York.
Box 11761.

INTELLIGENT, amusing, successful man, 51, would like to meet attractive, slim, well-educated lady for romantic, discreet liaison. Box 11861.

SECRET AFFAIR — slim, tall, classy and considerate, affluent man, 34, happily married, seeks slim, attractive, classy young lady with sense of humour to frolic with in discreet, uncomplicated affair. S/E. Photo please. Box 11961.

Our apologies!
There is still a delay before your Eye Love ad can be published due to the enormous demand of these exclusive, funny, popular and highly successful ads. Thank you for your patience.

ELIGIBLE BACHELOR, 31, tall, strong, handsome and kind, seeks pretty, blonde, public-school girlfriend, 18-22. (Send photo). Box 12161.

OCCASIONALLY WITTY, apparently good-looking male (25) seeks female for pubs, clubs and good times in Brighton area. Photo appreciated. Box 12261.

MALE, TALL, good looking, public school/university, sense of humour, seeks highly attractive female, circa 25-35, independent, with sense of humour. London/S.E. Box 12361.

HANDSOME, miserable git (28) seeks girl, 20s, for laughs. Kent/S.E. Photo appreciated. Box 12461.

TALL, PERSONABLE, sensual but sensitive bachelor (50), seeks gentle liaison with an empathetic younger lady who appreciates affection, consideration and laughter whilst easing his apprehensions into exquisite achievements. East Midlands. Box 12561.

PARIS LUNCH for best letter received from very attractive, educated, 25-40 lady (married/single). Discretion assured and required by similar male. Box 12661.

TALK TO ME about politics, religion, comedy, humanity. (Manchester, female). Box 12961.

FIT, 45 YEAR old Dorset man seeks fit, Dorset woman for mutual satisfaction. Discretion vital and guaranteed. Box 13061.

ZURICH BASED Brit, 33, free and solvent. Into (aprés) ski etc. Any single English-speaking women nearby? Box 13161.

TALL, ATTRACTIVE, successful businessman, 41, seeks stunning, vivacious lady (25-35) to accompany him on trips abroad. Everything first class. Photo appreciated. Box 12761.

ATTRACTIVE, outgoing female (27) looking for a single man (25-35) with a sense of humour for fun and romance. Glasgow/Scotland. Box 12861.

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Valentine Messages

♥ **TO KEITH** bee toolldd, love Candice-Marie. XXX

♥ **HUXLEY** pig says Oink! Oink!

♥ **TO A BALD,** skinny legged, fat gutted Jew, I love you, Allison.

♥ **BIMBO** Bimbette. No new material without you. Love as ever, forever. Super genius.

♥ **LITTLE PANDIES** I even miss your taste in men. Stormin' Wanger.

♥ **ANNE OF BRITWELL,** more beautiful than Mary, closer than Pat, and less Australian than Judy — be my Valentine?

♥ **OH SHIT!** Despite the complications I still love you Laura.

♥ **BB** Last Saturday's letter means that there is commitment? Hurrah! FB

♥ **LIZ:** Remember San Gimignano, the Undercliff and the book of poems.

♥ **WUG. BITS YOU** more than you'll ever, ever know! Shame it's not 'til death.

♥ **LITTLE ORCHID** invites her prince for a romp anytime. Still strong hunk!

♥ **BLODWIN** glad you like it down on the farm, BOYO.

♥ **NIGEL WOODDMS** — do you want to ride tandem?

♥ **KIRSTY,** all my love forever. Topic.

♥ **MRS FROAK** — I'll love you forever — Mr Froak.

♥ **ALBION!** How long will you play Lear to our Cordelia? Green Party.

♥ **PADDINGTON** (jodhpurs) Bear — yes one adores one — OP

♥ **GRANNY GRUNT,** to the greatest wife in the world. All my love, forever. Happy Valentine's Day. Piggy Snides.

♥ **UNCLESCHNUG** — be strawberries and cream please, I hate steak and kidney pie! Love you always! Babyschnug.

♥ **CHARLIE CHANCELLOR:** You can always count on my love.

♥ **HAVANA MAN:** Long may we check our weapons. Agent Smith.

♥ **TO JACKET** Potato. Love, Fried Egg.

♥ **MON PETITE** ourson!! Grrr-rrrr-owll!!! Buarfac.

♥ **MISS TIGGER,** be Mrs Bear in 91.

♥ **EDWARD SCRAMSON** I love you — Sniff Monster.

♥ **LOVEABLE YOU**
Note Enthusiastically, Today, this ending.

♥ **LITTLE RUMPY** — Stay up all night tonight? Peggus.

♥ **LONI,** love your smiling eyes, Burt.

♥ **TOAD LOVES** Hilly Bear very very much! H.L.T.?

♥ **JC EUR** LoVeS EAS.

♥ **BB. THIS DIET**
is taking too long! Let's do it anyway! Because I love you! BB.

♥ **LORNA,** Love and kisses. Tall, dark and handsome of Kew Gardens.

♥ **SUSAN** — Nobody gets my jelly roll while we're two of a kind. Hoffy.

♥ **CAN I PLAY** with you now, please, really? Erotic/T.L.C./fun? I love you, Pixie. Big deal!

♥ **TOUJOURS** belle du jour. Be my Varentine!

♥ **GREAT GUSTO** loves U.

♥ **SPECIAL,** you're the only Dumbo for me so plese don't become extinct. I love you. BB.

♥ **MUND:** He misses their snuggles and snoffles but be my Valentine anyway. BEVAL.

♥ **THE REDHEAD** loves yu, Doug.

♥ **SHUNSH,** our warm and wonderful person, (IYAM) love forever, Honeybun and Hannibal.

♥ **SWEET CHERUB** — hug kiss more now! Der der der! Love Bubs.

♥ **AUDREY** — The owls are not what they seem. All my love — Cooper.

♥ **O CAPTAIN!** My captain!

♥ **IF LOVE** can be measured by the number of times I whisper your name to the wind and write it on the sand for the seas to read, my love for you reaches beyond the furtherest star. Happy Valentine's day, little missy.

♥ **ROLY-POLY** lady, I still love you, I say! R. Weeee!

♥ **LAMBCAKE** — Best boy wants to be your has been.

♥ **ZOZZIN!** Je t'adore!

♥ **LOVE, KISSES** and snuggles from Bombay.

♥ **GERRY** Miss you, Liz.

♥ **PRACTICAL PIRATE** your sockstress awaits you.

♥ **FAN** — now you know what breeding leads to... Love, Steve.

♥ **MARION** — Valentine greetings from lucky, old Clive.

♥ **TO THE BOYS** in the gang — can you find me in all this?

♥ **ALL MY LOVE** to Miggins (and Mintballs).

♥ **MOI AUSSI** - from She Who Must Be Obeyed.

♥ **ANDREW,** now Nottingham, ex Welington NZ, ask me again and it's yours. Desperate. Sharon.

♥ **TO MY PRECIOUS** Naoko, Happy Valentines. With lots of love and kisses from Hiro.

♥ **IS IT TOO** late? Yours always. Made in Wales.

♥ **TEDDY BEAR,** Now you're getting better, will you love me forever, please? Squirrel.

♥ **DOCTOR.** To a doctor with special chemistry. I will be thinking of you today and tomorrow. From someone who is proud of you.

♥ **CAILIN,** There is no more Wimpey in Piccadilly Circus, but I will always love you. Carl.

♥ **REMEMBER:** "Some people are blessed;" I still believe. All my love. D.

♥ **DES SAYS** he loves Charlotte Boyle.

♥ **IT'S NO GOOD,** Noodle — nobody else will do.

♥ **KISSEY-KISSEY,** Lorna Jean, love, A. B. B.& W. C. and Cookie.

♥ **PENNY 143** forever.

♥ **POOH,** I love you all there is — and then some. Keep your snout down. Bubbly in basket on return. E.J.F.H. Happy VALENBEAR's Day, Tigger. XXXXX

♥ **50 GORDON'S** Terrace, Walkergate, with all my love, Dibble, 51 Stockmore Street.

♥ **WINNIT** Viking loves Susannah Mermaid +/- sea +/- elevation +/- rubber suit.

♥ **CRINKLEPALMS** — TOO Bits! — Reciprocated? (Gedd who?)

♥ **POOH,** love you, miss you, wish Roo's sandpit was nearer six pine trees! Everything's just fine. Tigger. XXX

♥ **BILLY,** Don't ever "slipaway" from me. Love always, Bubbly.

♥ **EXCALIBUR** Pussy-Pie loves you. Be my Valentine from your little love.

♥ **GOOSECREATURE** Rwy'n dy garu du Tickle Monster.

♥ **KING LOVED** by Mad-Woman.

♥ **HEDGEHOG** — Owl still loves you.

♥ **SWEETIE** — Love you lots — Poppet and the Big Fat Bastard.

♥ **SQUIDGER** — This is Part II 'cos I love you.

♥ **WHEEL** — I luv you loads. And loads and loads. SQUODGE.

♥ **DOCTOR DOCTOR** Your patient needs attention. A.B.

♥ **LINDA,** I'd rather go rowing.

♥ **MARTIN BUNNY** ...You light up my burrow. XXXXX

♥ **JAMES** Love you in Other Universe. Love you in this. Words can't express.

♥ **GILLIAN,** I love you lots and lots and lots. Nick.

♥ **NORMAN LUCK.** He put the cock into Bangkok.

♥ **NORMA SUGGS** for Big Bear, with love from Norma Stitz.

♥ **COLD SORES** Wrong person yet again. XXXOOO

♥ **HIYA "GORGE",** The Fat Bastard loves you more than a million Bensons. Kisses tonight please.

♥ **CINDY** the slut. I love you. Tigger.

♥ **KEITH SCHILLING.** Everybody's willing.

♥ **BLOND DAMSEL** still smitten by dinosaur devouring vegetarian Scot. (27.09.89) Please contact.

♥ **POOKIE** Happy Valentine's continued P. 94.

♥ **BARRY SHAW.** I'm begging for more.

♥ **NOT EVERY** beautiful young girl marries the balding, overweight, flatulent surveyor of her dreams. Congratulations Hun! All my love allways!

♥ **GEORGE C.** I want an uplift in my career. L.B.

♥ **NO VALENTINES** this year for all you tight-fisted, recessionist (and don't blame the Gulf either) ad men and lovely ladies who aren't taking advantage of Private Eye unique circulation and readership. Cheques out! Order books at the ready. T.R.

♥ **EX 14** — Welcome — love 85 (and Trev).

♥ **SANDRA B.** It's your dogs or me.

♥ **SCRUMMY BEAR** Still love that nose. Piggy.

♥ **CHUFFY,** I'll love you always — Wobbleguts.

♥ **FORGET MISS M.** Keep on knitting. Middle-aged lover.

♥ **TO MY BANBURY** Banker. Let's not beat around the bush. You and your teddy are keeping me away from my desk right now. In fact I think I need a hand to cope with my lust. I desperately hope you come for Easter. From an uptight German citizen.

♥ **ISABEL** from Grouchos. Why the torment?

♥ **BOOTS!** — Polish clean wear them even — but please don't take them away. Love J.C.

♥ **CSÁBA IMRÉ.** I almost did it.

♥ **BUTTERFLY** minded — I'll settle 4 U.

♥ **DOB,** All my love always, Cuddling Yobe.

♥ **FOR BRIDGET,**
I made love to my love on the train
which may strike you as rather profane,
but the smell on my fingers so
cunningly lingers,
I'm afraid I shall do it again. J.

♥ **PETEE** — Thank heaven for little grumblies — Jo.

♥ **COME** Dawn Valentine Largs Raasay Apples.

♥ **THANKS TO** Private Eye Helena loves Jeremy with lots of hugs.

♥ **DONK:** Come out to play, with your "R.S.J." Love FOREVER, Button.

♥ **BOO** — Thanks for staying with me for better or worse. I love you more now than ever before. Yours, BINKY.

♥ **CAPITAINE** — Oh to be with you in the still of the night — Sous-Fifre.

♥ **SAMBROOKES** — make that Riff Staccato.

♥ **EYE LOVE YOU** and eye want you forever. Davey.

♥ **DICK GREENER** is the most gorgeous, delicious, wonderful sexy man in the entire universe. It's a well known fact.

♥ **TO MY** heff-a-luv — be my valentine? XX

♥ **PIXIE MCG** log my fault m'dear!

♥ **SYBARITIC SIRENS** Many thanks for a most enjoyable night. Especially the very pulchritudinous asphodel, Cait C.

♥ **TIM,** withstanding slug 'n' lettuce, be my hardy perennial in the allotment of life.

♥ **ZOLA** We make turi-turi? Slaphead.

♥ **BOSS.** Norris is persistent. Madness! Still love you. Baggers.

♥ **NO BOOBS** but with a bum like whose complaining — Love Bastard.

♥ **BOUVINGS, KAY:** All my love today and always — from your Bouvings.

♥ **LE TAMBOUR-TIGRE** aime le tambour-ours. Vive la 46ieme!

♥ **MORE THAN** ever. Yours affec. Less than a sec.

♥ **PATTY** — my valentine, my everything. With everlasting love, JP.

♥ **ETHEL THE** Sloth: hugs and snugglebunnies from Parsnip, and big sloppy kisses from Tortoise and Toadstool.

♥ **BEANNIE,** still ditto, Bagpuss.

♥ **BINGO. SCRABO?** Moat Park? Woof! Love you more each day. Be mine always. Yours until the end of time. Snork.

♥ **LETTUCE LEAF** says Happy Valentine's Day.

♥ **MOO**

♥ **SONIA S.** dated Rudolph Hess.

♥ **FIOSHKA** — Undercover mission for Kremlin Cutie. Contact Subversive Influence.

♥ **TINY MOUSE** in palm loves her furry bear.

♥ **BLOODY CHARTRES** Squawk

♥ **BARBARA J.** Let's play then flay. Love P.S.

♥ **RAMBO** Mushy peas Chinese style, Dodo. ("Good grief," says Kevin, "What an embarrassment!")

♥ **I LOVE AND** need your BENT TOOL.

♥ **JILL B.** It's really quite easy.

♥ **FUNGUS:** Love you humungusly. Best beloved. Kisses, R.

♥ **HUNKY** This is a massage voucher. Cut out and keep. Big love. Jolly.

♥ **ANTJE** — Douglas loves you very much.

♥ **B.O.W.** Igloooo! Big snogs. Andy, XXXX.

♥ **SCUDS OR** no Scuds, I love you forever big thing. Your best Ted.

♥ **PAUL,** Feel the fear and do it anyway.

♥ **AGENT SMITH** Have retrieved microfilm from fat man at bazaar. It reads, "I love you". OMIH.

♥ **HOFFY,** Over there remember I'm still here. Susan.

♥ **GARY,** Obviously, I am still completely oblivious!

♥ **PUNJI** I love you. Thanks for everything. Fumble Floosie.

♥ **BRIDGET CRANWILL** don't forget. S.

♥ **BELINZINHA.** Eu amor voce. Beijos Belinzinho.

♥ **OLIVE/** Harrogate please ring Den.

♥ **BIG NOSE.** Your lips drive me wild. Adore you anyway. RG.

♥ **JERSEY GIRL** You may be out of sight but never out of mind. Come home safely darling. Love you. FM.

♥ **GARRY,** My love always. Francine.

♥ **SLEEPY OLD**
man in Rome, I love you.

♥ **LEMAN.** This won't be the most original or amusing message but it will be the most sincere. I love you darling. Tom.

♥ **PAULTJE** — I love you yummy. Nessje.

♥ **DEVON PUSSYCAT** — thinking hard about you — love you — Gulf Willie.

♥ **CLARESKI** — We will be lovers.

♥ **OI! MR STUBBLE** I love you just for listening. Mush.

♥ **WILL CUTEBUNS** be my Valentine? from Honeybun XXX

♥ **HOOPS,** Lose some weight, Doops XXX

♥ **POLECAT,** my noble-nosed friend, I love you, from Beagley.

♥ **POOSIE,** Love you, love you. Dilby Doo.

♥ **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT:** Amanda loves Dave.

♥ **KDB** May there be many more miles on the M1 together, love Smiling Driver.

♥ **CHRISTINE,** Swop you a Guinness for a Tia Maria anytime.

♥ **PERV,** Ming misses Mong's torch, love Fatarse.

♥ **PENNY,** Nosferatu without you. Please *remove* garlic before stake pierces my heart! Love you, Rees.

♥ **A TIGRESS** with long stripey tail,
Who lives for the phone and the mail,
Is longing for Bear
To be there in her lair,
Where she'll love him for good, without fail.
This tigress is all of a muddle
Without you to kiss or to cuddle,
Bear, come stroke my fur
Till your touch makes me purr,
And together, forever, we'll huddle.
All I can do now is pine
Till the day you are here, and all mine.
You can do what you wish,
Make my stripey tail swish,
If you'll please be my Bear valentine.

♥ **ELSA BUNNY** — hopping mad about you!

♥ **I LOVE YOU** Simon Hawkins, but you know that and it's cost me £13.00 to say it, shit £18.00.

♥ **MARTIN** — Ich liebe dich, vierklich! — SCHATZE.

♥ **AMANDA** — gorgeous, pouting, very Cuban!

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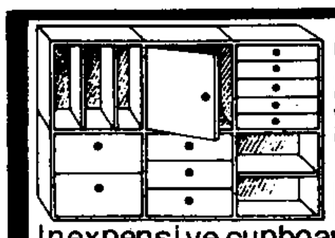

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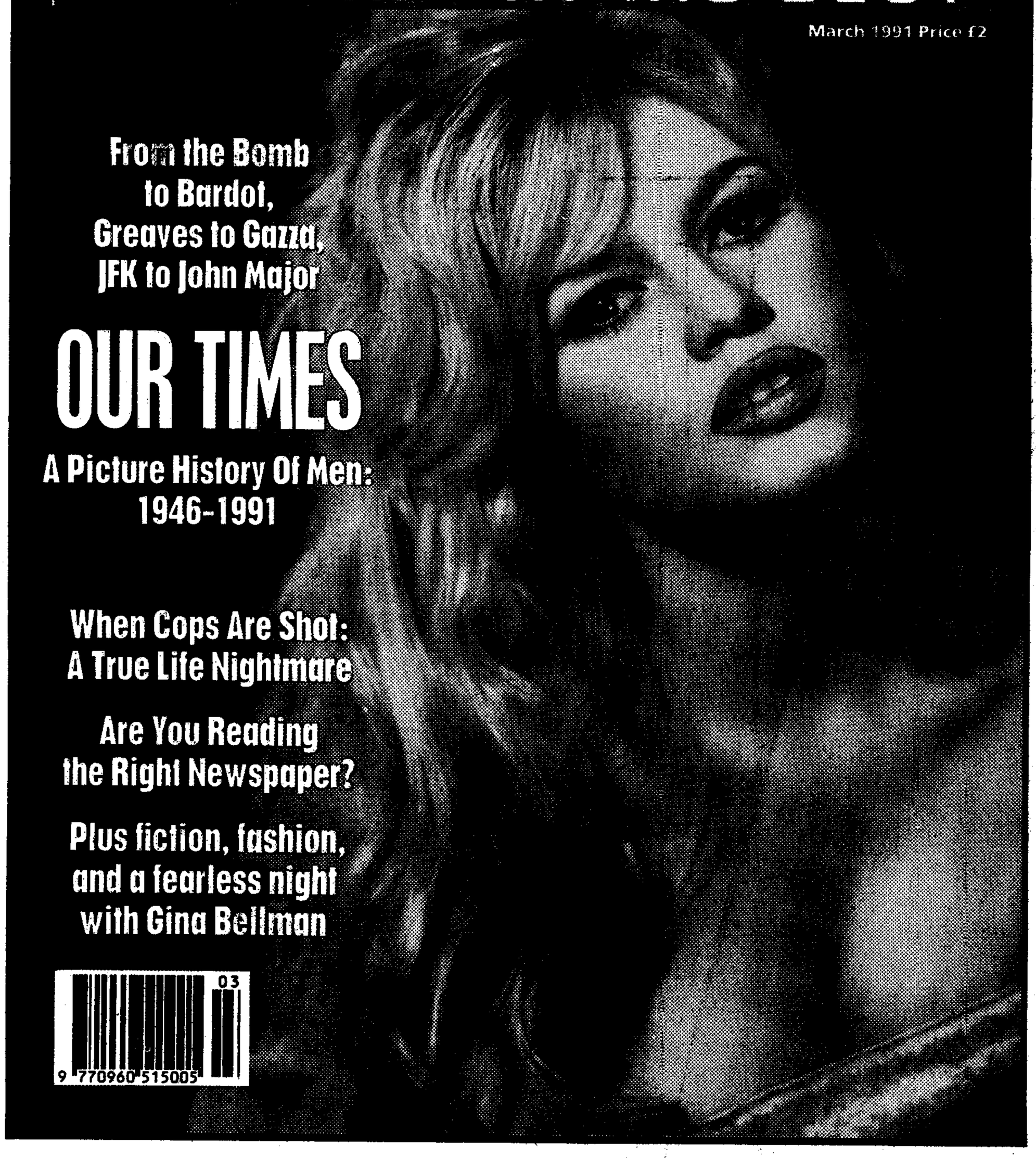

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